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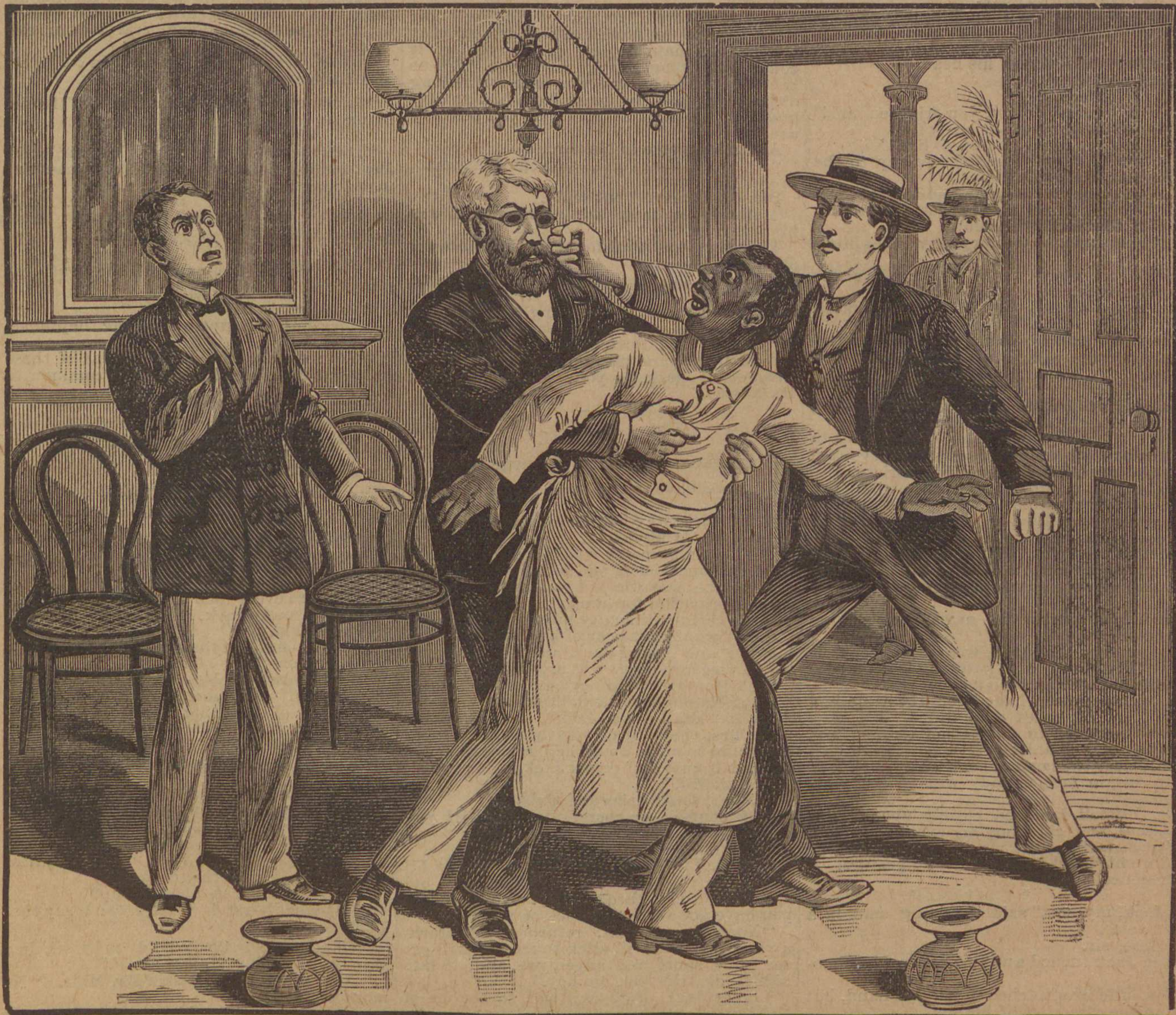
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Vol. II.

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Jack Harkaway and His Son's Adventures Round the World.



"Will you desist?" cried Jack Harkaway, all his old pluck mounting to his brave heart. "No," cried the giant, fiercely. "I shall strike if you do not, so I warn you." Toro's only reply was to squeeze again, eliciting a groan of anguish from the miserable negro. Harkaway clenched his fists, and dashing forward, gave Toro two fearful blows. The disguised brigand staggered back.

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Jack Harkaway and His Son's Adventures Round the World.

CHAPTER I.

JACK COMES INTO AN INHERITANCE, AND DETERMINES TO TRAVEL ONCE MORE.

You who have followed Jack Harkaway's progress at school and Oxford, on sea and land, at home and abroad, have seen how brave and noble he was.

When our Jack's son was just turned twelve years old, a great sorrow came upon him and his family. His father fell ill.

The family doctor was called in and consulted by Jack with some eagerness, for the old gentleman's complaint had puzzled them.

"If you can tell us what's the matter with my poor governor," said Jack, "we shall look upon you as a wonder."

"What are the symptoms?" demanded Doctor Purcell.

"There are no painful symptoms."

"Doesn't he complain of anything?"

"Lassitude, weakness, dizziness in the head."

"Well," said Dr. Purcell, smiling, "these are symptoms; that is what I asked you for."

"Well," returned Jack, "go and see him."

The doctor was very grave and full of anxiety on his return to Jack.

Jack saw there was something wrong.

"Doctor," he said, with great anxiety, "what is the matter?"

Doctor Purcell shook his head.

"Is my father ill?"

"He is, indeed."

"Good heaven, doctor, you frighten me!" exclaimed Jack, "not seriously?"

"He has not twelve hours to live!"

The words struck Jack Harkaway to the very heart like a knife.

"Your father wants you," added the doctor; "some matters of business are troubling him, that is very evident."

"What is it in particular that worries him?"

"He wants to make his will."

Jack's father was, as the doctor said, at the point of death.

He was also, it is true, troubling himself about his worldly affairs.

The trouble on his mind at that dreadful time was concerning some property he possessed in the island of Cuba.

Now the estate, from which he had derived for a long while a very considerable income, had lost two-thirds of its value of late.

The civil war which raged for so long in that unhappy island depreciated every property and ruined many landed proprietors.

The Cuban agent (a gentleman owning the high-sounding name of Don Jose Serrano D'Acquila) was killed in a skirmish during the early part of the civil war, and then the collection of Harkaway's quarterly monies fell into the hands of a stranger called Ostano.

Ostano left the island, it appeared, for political reasons.

Since his departure no news had been received of him.

The matter, it is true, was urgent, but it caused his son no little pain to see his father trouble about it at such a time.

It would indeed have been the same had their bread depended upon it.

Jack mounted to his father's room, and then he was infinitely shocked to see how fatally near the last moment was.

He was, in fact, already wandering in his mind.

Dr. Purcell followed closely upon Jack's footsteps, and catching his eye in the looking-glass facing the door as they entered, he held up his hand with a warning gesture.

"Silence!"

* * * * *

"Jack, my son," said the dying man, in a faint voice.

"Here, sir."

And Jack turned away to conceal his emotion.

The sufferer stretched forth his hand, but not in the direction of his son.

His sight was gone.

Jack saw it, and he took his father's hand in his.

"My poor boy," said the dying man, "I am going to leave you soon."

Jack was silent. The words of the dying man seemed to thrill him.

"I want to know that you and my dear grandson, my little Jack, are well provided for."

"We have all that we can possibly desire in the world, dear father."

"But there is that rich Cuban property—your birthright, John."

"Do not trouble about it, sir."

"But you must see after it. Do you hear me, Jack?"

"I hear you, sir."

"And my commands are that you see after your property."

"I will obey you, sir."

"It is not for myself, John, I speak. You have a son, God bless him!"

"Amen," said Jack, piously.

"He is good, and will be a brave boy. He has been a great comfort to me, and reminds me of you, Jack, when his age."

"He is wild and thoughtless, sir," said Jack; "but, believe me, he is a true boy of England, has a good heart, and loves you tenderly."

"I know it well," retorted the dying man; "but I would not have him shocked by what is about to happen. He is too young; it comes quite soon enough upon you. Let us keep him from the presence of death as long as possible; keep my death from him at first and then break it as gently as you possibly can."

A big lump rose in his throat.

"Farewell, dear Jack," said the dying man, in mournful accents.

But his son could not reply.

A silent pressure of that clammy hand was his sole response.

They remained thus for several minutes in silence.

Presently the pressure of the father's hand relaxed. The son looked up.

Then he gave a cry of mingled grief and awe. All was over; Jack's father was dead.

"Come," said Doctor Purcell, placing his arm in Jack's, and leading him gently away, "come and speak to your son, young Jack Harkaway."

CHAPTER II.

COMMENCEMENT OF NEW ADVENTURES.

Now we have to step over a certain lapse of time.

Jack Harkaway bore in mind the injunctions of his dying father.

The Cuban property was in urgent need of personal supervision, and so Jack determined to cross the Atlantic and rout out the necessary information for himself.

But a certain difficulty presented itself.

Emily would not hear of her husband leaving her and young Jack, and so it fell out that a pleasure party was organized.

Dick Harvey would not hear of his friends leaving England without him.

"What shall I do, Jack?" he exclaimed, when first the subject was broached. "I'm not going to mope away here all alone."

"But I must go," urged Jack.

"So shall I."

"What, to America and Cuba?"

"Of course; or round the world, if you wish."

"You don't mean it?"

"Don't I? You'll see; where you go I'll go, unless you've turned sneak in your old age, and want to throw over your pals, unless you have got altogether sick of me."

"None of your chaff," returned Jack Harkaway. "If you will stick to me, we will yet see more sport and adventure, and, if fate bids it, die together, old boy."

Young Jack, of course, was to be one of the party, and, although small in years, he proved to be big in action.

Consequently his tutor, our old friend Isaac Mole, was bound to accompany them.

Our old friend Monday was in great form, making the preparations for the voyage.

"America and Cuba," said Monday, with enthusiasm. "Dat's bery much magnificent. I shall be one big man there."

"Magnificent!" iterated Dick Harvey; "that's not the word; it's golioshus."

Monday, according to custom, ran after his dictionary and referred; but much to his disappointment, he failed to find the significance of Dick's adjective.

As for Mr. Mole, his delight took the most extravagant form.

"Cross the Atlantic," he said, in ecstasy. "It will seem quite like old times."

"You'll go, then?" demanded young Jack, anxiously.

"Go, of course I will; splice my jibboom."

Young Jack was rather alarmed at his tutor's oath.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Oh, that's merely a nautical habit of mine. I feel like an old salt again, directly I hear them talk of the sea."

"And does that make you say splice your—your jibboom?"

"Yes, that's it," said Mr. Mole.

Mr. Mole walked up the room, turning an imaginary quid, and hitching his trousers up, after the fashion of nautical men on the stage.

Young Jack watched his tutor in considerable curiosity.

"Is there anything the matter, sir?" he demanded.

"No; why?"

"Because you keep doing that, sir," said Jack Junior, pointing to Mr. Mole's nautical manœuvres.

"My sailor habits," returned Mr. Mole, blandly; "we term that, technically, hoisting our slacks."

"Slacks?"

"Yes, slacks, the nautical for continuations."

"Good gracious!"

"Very singular expressions, are they not?"

"Very."

"Yes; we old tars can't get out of these habits; that especially is a trick common to all of us."

"Which?"

"Hitching."

"Itching?" said young Jack, slyly. "It looks more like scratching; I thought you'd got a flea."

Mr. Mole gave his pupil a very sharp look at this reply. It sounded like his father's old impudent style.

But young Jack looked as demure as a school girl, so Mr. Mole took it for sheer innocence.

"You are every inch a sailor, Mr. Mole, I see," said young Jack, when they were fairly on board ship.

"There's no denying that," replied the modest tutor.

"You share all the good qualities of a true British tar," said young Jack, piling it up for the fun of the thing, to see how far Mr. Mole's brag and mendacity would carry him, "all of them."

"And some of their weaknesses," said Mr. Mole.

"Rum, for instance?"

"I won't deny that I like a little rum," replied Mr. Mole, "a very little."

"Of course. And your pigtail?"

"Well," replied Mr. Mole, "I will confess that I like a bit for the tooth."

"And you like rats aboard ship?"

"Eh! what!—rats! Well, I can't say that I do."

"Oh, but no sailor would go to sea in a ship that hadn't rats, I've heard."

"No more would I," said Mr. Mole. "No more would I."

"Of course not," said young Jack; "you are so superstitious, you seafaring men."

"That we are."

"And afraid of ghosts?"

"Eh? No, no," said Mr. Mole, "not afraid of ghosts."

"Oh, you must be," pursued young Jack.

"Not I; in fact," said Mr. Mole, "that is the only characteristic which I do not share with mariners."

"You don't believe in supernatural things, then?"

"Not I."

"Sailors always do."

"I know that," said Mr. Mole, "but I was always of too dare-devil a character for that. Indeed, I believe that if I saw the old gentleman himself, it wouldn't alarm me."

"Lor', sir!"

And young Jack pretended to be wofully afraid at the bare mention of the evil one.

As young Jack was going aft, Ben Hawser accosted him.

"Beg your pardon, Master Jack," said the honest tar, "would you like to see Nero?"

"Is he a Newfoundland?" asked young Jack.

"Lord bless your heart, no, sir," replied the sailor; "Nero's a monkey."

"A monkey?"

"Yes, a fine fellow, and as harmless as a child; only they won't let me set him loose."

"Why not?"

"The passengers would not like it."

Nero was a full-grown chimpanzee, standing over four feet high.

A square-shouldered, thick-set monkey, that looked like a stunted man.

He was as strong as he was lithe and agile, and although full of tricks, when at liberty he was not vicious.

He was kept in a large cage like a horse-box, with a grated door, where he had just enough room to move about, but no more.

"Nero," said Ben Hawser, opening the door, "I've brought your prog."

The monkey grinned.

Evidently he was not sorry to be at feeding time again.

"Poor Nero," said his master, "tip us your fin."

The monkey shook hands in the most natural way in the world.

"Now shake hands with Master Jack."

Never was such an intelligent chimpanzee.

He held out his paw immediately, and made friends with our young hero.

"Up here, Nero," said Ben.

Nero leaped out of his cage, and with a hop was on Ben Hawser's shoulders.

"Up! T'other way up!"

In an instant Nero was standing on his head on Ben's, balancing himself as cleverly as a trained acrobat.

"Down."

Nero dropped to the deck.

"Over—turn!"

Nero threw a back somersault, and then a succession of what professional tumblers call flip-flaps, concluding with a bow that would not have disgraced a real ring-master in a real circus.

Jack was delighted, and he patted and caressed the chimpanzee, while the latter grinned, showing at once his teeth and his satisfaction.

"Can he do anything else?"

"Lots of tricks," replied Ben Hawser. "Would you like to see some more?"

"That I should."

"Then here goes—stop," he added, sinking his voice; "here comes the captain, and I shall get into trouble."

CHAPTER III.

WESTWARD HO!

"WHAT are you up to, Hawser?" said the captain, approaching.

"Only showing Master Jack the monkey, your honor," answered Ben Hawser.

"And what does Master Jack think of the monkey?"

Jack answered with enthusiasm:

"Nero's a splendid fellow! I should like to have Nero more than all the world."

"What would you do with Nero if you had him?" asked the captain, smiling.

"Why, to begin with," answered young Jack,

promptly, "I would make him frighten old Mole out of his skin."

"Ah, but we can't let him loose," said the captain, laughing, "for Ben Hawser has brought it specially to sell to Mr. Jamrach, the great dealer in London."

"But he could sell it to me instead," urged Jack. "Why not?"

"Because it is a very rare and costly kind of chimpanzee, and Mr. Jamrach is to pay goodness knows how much for it."

"My father can pay more," said young Jack, proudly.

"Perhaps—but he will have to pay a good stiff sum, for the carriage of Master Nero will have cost Ben Hawser something. Mr. Jamrach offered him eighty pounds. Ben didn't think it enough, and so he brought it away again. The great dealer sent an offer after him, but it was too late; the 'Prospero' had started, and so Nero has to make another voyage before he claims his master."

"My father will give a good deal more, I know," said Jack. "But you will let Nero out, captain?"

The skipper paused.

"What do you say, Ben?"

"There's no danger, your honor."

"Sure?"

"Sartin."

"Then I think that—but what do you want with him out at large?"

"Why," said young Jack, chuckling, "old Mole was bragging to me that he's not afraid of ghosts, and I should like to send Nero down dressed up when he's asleep and pay him out."

The captain shook his head and tried to look serious.

"I'm afraid you're very like your father, Master Jack," he said.

"Thank you, sir."

"I mean that you are an incorrigible practical joker."

"Mr. Mole is fair game, I think, sir," said young Jack.

"Well, that is true, perhaps, but I can't be a party to such pranks upon the passengers on board my ship."

And so saying, he turned to walk away.

"But may I let out the monkey?" asked Jack.

"Well," replied the captain, with a smile, "I can't recognize any such thing; only I shan't know, of course, who has let Nero out—of course."

"Oh, of course," said Ben Hawser, looking inexpressibly artful and putting his finger to his nose.

* * * * *

Well, Ben Hawser and young Jack together got Nero out, and dressed him in a night-shirt that reached to his heels, and a frilled night-cap that an old woman on board ship lent them.

And then everything was prepared for their plot.

It was evening by this time, and the moon had risen, so that the hour was all that could be desired for the business before them.

Now young Jack and his accomplice, Ben Hawser, had said little or nothing about their plot, yet somehow it got whispered all over the ship, and by the time that all was ripe for the worrying of poor old Mole there was a goodly audience assembled about the deck near the tutor's cabin.

There was a window or ventilator in the roof of Mole's cabin just over his berth, through which young Jack spoke an impressive address to the tutor.

It was groaned through a big speaking trumpet, which lent a sepulchral tone to the awful message.

Mr. Mole had imbibed freely that evening, and he went to bed rather earlier than usual, as he found some difficulty in keeping his sea legs.

The worthy tutor, when he retired to rest promptly upon his libations, dreamed invariably.

This night his visions were of a most horrible nature.

He thought that his brace of wives from the island of Limbi had brought their offspring, two lots of twins, who had grown to young men and women, and the whole six of them were dancing a diabolical cancan round his bed.

He tried hard to chivey them off, but tried in vain.

He next aroused himself in his efforts.

"Isaac Mole! Isaac Mole!" cried a solemn voice.

He sat upright in his berth, and listened.

"Who calls?" he asked, in a sort of nervous tremolo.

"Isaac Mole! Isaac Mole," repeated the same unearthly voice, "prepare! prepare!"

"Oh, Lord!" cried the tutor, aghast. "For what?"

"For the return of the wife you have so cruelly deserted."

And this was followed by a dismal groan.

Poor Mole felt alarmed then.

But it was nothing to the fear he experienced the next moment, when he heard a faint scratching noise in the corner of the cabin.

He stared in that direction, and—oh, horror!—something white moved.

He turned all over goose flesh.

An awful sensation.

A creepy, crawly feeling came over him.

A white thing in the corner rose up, and assumed a female form.

At the same time the sepulchral voice before heard exclaimed:

"Isaac Mole, you do not fear ghosts? You do not believe that we departed people revisit the earth?"

"Oh, yes! oh, yes!" groaned Mole.

And he tried to cover his head over.

But the ghost made a leap—it was a wonderfully nimble ghost—on to Mr. Mole's bed, and sat grinning at him.

He looked up aghast.

He never forgot the horrible phantom that sat before him.

The face of the specter was black and hirsute, and while, to all appearance, it was the shade of his late wife, the face was that of the prince of darkness himself.

"Mole! Mole!"

"Oh!" groaned the wretched tutor.

"Do you believe in ghosts now?"

"Of course I do."

"And fear them?"

"Oh, yes, yes!"

"And you'll never brag again to your pupil?"

"Never, never."

"Swear."

"I do, I do. Oh, Lord, have mercy upon me," groaned the unhappy Mole.

The ghost of the late Mrs. Mole made a tug at the coverlet, and dragged it away from Mole's face.

The tutor could bear no more.

He leapt from the bed.

Over went the ghost of the late Mrs. Mole in a most undignified scramble.

Her night-dress flew up, and then—oh, terror!—his worst fears were realized.

He saw a long tail.

It was fortunate that Mr. Mole had gone to bed in his trousers, for he ran up the ladder on deck with one despairing cry, quite heedless of the fact that his braces were flying behind him, and that he wore his night-cap.

"Murder! murder!" yelled the wretched Mole, as he flew up, the ghost after him, close at his heels.

More terrors awaited the tutor on the deck.

A long, lank figure, draped in a dismal shroud, beneath which appeared two wooden legs, leaned against the mainmast evidently waiting for its victim.

Mole drew up short in his wild rush.

This was a colossal ghost, and it towered threateningly over Mole.

Mole gave a cry, and darted back to the ladder, but he heard the first ghost clattering up in pursuit.

What was to be done?

"I'll have you," said the colossal spectre, bending over him. "Come to my arms."

And its two arms opened wide to embrace him.

"Oh, mercy!" gasped Mole.

And then he dodged his long, spectral visitor round the mainmast.

An exciting chase now ensued.

The long ghost appeared slightly weak-kneed, like very many lanky people, and could not get along as nimbly as Mole, but this was counter-

balanced in a certain measure by his great length of reach.

First one way and then the other went Mole.

And, while they were dodging in this way, Mole fancied that he perceived spectral forms filling the air in all directions, and the most unearthly cries smote upon his terror-stricken ears.

It never occurred to him that these cries came from human throats; aye, and familiar ones too.

And this for the simple reason that during the whole scene the skipper and Jack Harkaway, senior, and Harvey and a lot of the crew were standing by, convulsed with laughter.

The little black ghost with the tail now joined its lanky brother, and poor Mole was hard put to it.

He kept the mainmast well between him and the enemy for awhile, but suddenly a new foe sprang up in his rear.

A black hand reached down from the cross-tree, beneath which he stood, and grabbed his cotton night-cap.

Mole looked up.

"Oh, mercies!" he gasped, "Beelzebu himself."

A black face, white teeth, and big, glistening eyes were peering down upon him from above.

A demoniacal chuckle came from that huge mouth.

Mole shivered from head to foot.

"By golly, I've got um," said a voice, which sounded most diabolical in Mole's ears.

To casual listeners it would have borne a very striking resemblance to Monday's voice.

Mole dodged again, gave a wild, unearthly yell, and dashed to the cabin stairs.

Down he went, all of a scramble, dashed to the door and leaned panting up against it.

In this position he remained until morning dawned.

* * * * *

The ghost of the late Mrs. Mole grew skittish, upon which Ben Hawser laid her without bell or book, but simply took off her nightcap and nightgown, and revealed Nero the chimpanzee beneath.

The black ghost aloft dropped off the crosstree on deck, and helped the colossal ghost to disrobe.

And when this was done, the colossal ghost looked more like young Jack Harkaway on stilts than anyone you can imagine.

* * * * *

Do you think Mr. Mole was cured of bragging? Not he.

Young Jack woke him up in the morning, and inquired if he had slept well.

"Pretty well," he answered, coolly.

"I fancied I heard you cry out," said young Jack.

"Not I," said Mole, stoutly.

A merry twinkle in young Jack's eye half betrayed him, and Mr. Mole being pretty ready, said:

"I fancied that some of the crew were up to their tricks with me, so I ran up on deck to punish them. Your father," he added, changing the subject abruptly, "your father will tell you that I was always an intrepid sailor."

"Indeed?"

"Yes."

"Well, I should never have thought it, sir."

"Why not?"

"I should not have thought you were able to give your mind to such trivial matters."

Mr. Mole was flattered at this.

In his enthusiasm, he was apt to deviate a good deal from the strict truth.

But he had one peculiarity in his deviations.

He repeated the same lie so often, and with such relish, that at length, like the Gascons, he believed it himself.

Jack strolled up on deck, where his son was talking with Mr. Mole.

The latter appealed to him at once for confirmation of his audacious fibs.

"An intrepid sailor!" ejaculated Jack, senior.

"Yes; was I not?"

Young Jack winked at his father, as much as to say, "Don't spoil sport, dad."

So Jack senior fell into the fun of the thing at once.

"Of course you were, Mr. Mole."

"Dare-devil fellow, wasn't I?"

"By jingo, you were."

"The first up the rigging?"

"Like a monkey."

"Egad, I was," said Mr. Mole, quite delighted. "No lubber's hole for me."

"No," said Jack Harkaway, "that's true enough; you never crept through the lubber's hole;" then he added to himself, "for I'm hanged if ever you got within ten feet of it."

But alas for the mutability of human affairs!

Alas for the weakness of the human stomach!

They were not three days afloat, when poor Mr. Mole fell woefully seasick.

He kept to his berth for three days and nights, moaning piteously, and only imploring them at painful intervals to pitch him overboard.

Dick Harvey and young Jack could not quite forgive him for his crammers.

It is not quite the generous thing to hit a man when he is down; but they determined to have some fun with him.

So they went to his berth.

Mr. Mole looked precious queer.

His eyes were a deep yellow, and his skin assumed a ghastly, greenish tint.

"I hope you are better by this time, sir," said young Jack.

Mr. Mole groaned.

"I'm half dead."

"Dear me!" said Dick, appearing to take it literally; "I shouldn't have thought it."

"I wish I was thrown overboard," said Mr. Mole again.

"Mr. Mole," said Harvey, in a voice of sham solemnity, "I've come to gratify you."

"Me?" groaned Mole, piteously. "You can't do it."

"I can."

"How?"

"In your only desire."

"Rubbish!" snapped up the suffering tutor. "I have only one wish."

"What is it?"

"To be thrown overboard; I wish I'd the strength to jump."

"It shall be done," said Dick, with a very serious air.

"What?"

Mole did not think that he had heard aright.

"You shall be thrown overboard," repeated Dick, seriously. "You shall, if you wish it, become food for the little fishes."

His former pupil's manner fixed Mr. Mole's attention in spite of himself, and it had at the same time a very excellent effect for the moment.

It made him forget his sea-sickness.

"Oh! I wish I was a fish with a great, big tail," sang young Jack.

"Harvey, and you, young Jack," said Mr. Mole, with another groan, "it is very indelicate to joke over a man who is half dead."

"Quite right," said Harvey, seriously. "It is, very. I hope no one has ventured to take such a liberty, Mr. Mole, in my absence."

Mole roared.

He bounced upright in his berth, and in so doing he bumped his head against the beam just above.

"I mean you," he cried, rubbing his hurt.

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"I assure you I'm not joking," said Harvey, gravely; "seeing that you were very seriously ill, I made up my mind that anything that lay in my power to gratify you should be done."

"Well?"

"Well, you expressed a wish."

"I didn't. Nothing but pitching me overboard to put an end to my misery."

Dick pressed Mr. Mole's hand with silent warmth.

"It shall be done."

Mr. Mole was staggered.

His jaw dropped, and he stared aghast at Dick.

But Harvey kept his countenance wonderfully well.

"What do you mean?"

"That you shall be thrown over, or rather that you shall be lowered decently, and with all the respect that is due to you, Mr. Mole."

"What!" almost shrieked poor Mole, "thrown overboard?"

"Yes."

"Alive?"

"Yes."

"It would be murder."

"Not if it is your request."

"But—"

"Trust in me, my dear friend," said Dick in a voice broken with grief, "I heard you ask it so often, that knowing you to be a man who weighs his words well before uttering them, I determined you should be obeyed."

"You did?" gasped Mole.

"Yes."

"But the captain would never allow it," urged the tutor.

"Yes, he would."

"Then he's a murderer, an assassin, nothing better."

"No, he's not. I knew he would refuse if I told him the truth, so I said that you had a bad attack of yellow fever."

"The devil you did!"

"Yes," said Harvey, complacently, as if conscious that he was rendering Mole a great service, "and after much persuasion he consented."

"The villain!"

"But only with the greatest reluctance, after young Jack had explained your bad case."

"The young monster!"

"Yes, yes; I have carried out all the arrangements in a way that will be most satisfactory to you."

"Harvey, dear Harvey!"

Dick took no notice, but went on, apparently not hearing the reproachful tone in which poor old Mole spoke.

"We will leave you now, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, "to compose yourself. Jack."

"Yes, Mr. Harvey."

"Say good-bye forever to Mr. Mole."

"Yes, sir."

"It is the last time you will see him."

Jack junior hid his face in his handkerchief, as if sobbing convulsively.

In reality he could not control his laughter any longer, such a comical picture did his tutor present.

Fright of the most exaggerated character was depicted in his face, and his head hid in a cotton handkerchief, presented the look of a practical joker's ghost, with a dash of the scarecrow about it.

"Good-bye, Mr. M—M—Mole," sobbed young Jack, behind his handkerchief.

"Jack, my own dear young Jack, don't leave me!"

But Jack affected not to hear.

He dared not show his face, so he moved towards the companion ladder first, for fear of spoiling sport, as he termed it, and as he followed, he turned to deliver this parting shot at the terrified Mole:

"Compose your mind if you can."

"Come back," gasped Mole. "Harvey, I say, come back; do, please, come back to your old, old Mole."

"Your last wishes shall be obeyed, trust me for that—"

"Will you listen to me?"

"I am going to send down some of the crew with a hammock."

Mole half sprang from his berth.

"What for?"

"To sew you up in before you become the poor victim of the wandering fishy tribe," replied Harvey.

"Oh! horror," cried Mole.

"Yes," said Harvey, nodding his head with great seriousness. "The time is quite propitious; no one's about. We shall sew a twenty-four pound shot at your feet, and down you'll go like a stone."

"But I won't," roared Mole, thoroughly aroused now; "I say I—"

"You must."

"I won't, I—"

"But you must; you'd float else, and then you'd be snapped up by the shoal of sharks and torn piecemeal."

"Oh! oh! oh!"

Harvey was pitiless.

"Yes, sewn up in a nice hammock with a twenty-four pound shot, and then I shall have at least the

consolation of knowing that I have done all that could be done to make the last moments of my old friend and tutor comfortable."

He went up on deck.

The groan of anguish of poor Mole, followed him up the companion ladder.

"Isn't he in a state, Mr. Harvey?" said young Jack.

"He is," said Dick, "and serves him right for telling such crammers. Take warning, Jack, and be truthful yourself."

Dick hadn't done with him yet.

He called two of the sailors.

"Can you take a hammock down to the gentleman in the cabin?"

"Mr. Mole, sir?"

"Yes."

"Aye, aye, yer honor."

"Very good; two of you carry it down, and make as little noise as you can."

"What are we to do with it?" demanded the sailor.

"Mr. Mole wants it slung, I think," answered Harvey.

"Can't sleep in his berth, I suppose, your honor?"

"That's it."

"Don't wonder at it. A hammock all the world over for me."

"You are right, shipmate," answered Harvey; "down with you, and inform Mr. Mole that you have a very large needle and strong thread with you."

The hammock was brought, and down they stepped gingerly, so as to make as little noise as possible.

Harvey and young Jack anxiously watched the result from aloft. They had not long to wait.

Mole no sooner caught sight of the hammock than, with a mighty roar, he sprang bodily out of his berth, to which he had retired, dressed in shirt and trousers, and overturning the basin that stood at hand, seized a chair, with which he struck wildly at them.

"Stand off!"

"Your honor!" exclaimed the amazed tar.

"What's up?—we have got a good hammock for you, and a large needle and strong thread."

"Sew me up, would you?"

"Do what?"

"Sew me up—twenty-four pound shot, eh?"

"I beg your honor's pardon," said one of the sailors, approaching.

Mole flourished his chair menacingly.

The sailor stepped back.

"I'll brain the first man that comes near me," cried Mole, excitedly. "Murder me, would you?—sew me up, would you?"

The sailors could only interpret his wild gestures in one way.

They made sure he was mad.

So they tried to soothe and coax him into quietness.

"Come, come, your honor," said one of them, "let's help you back into your berth. Here's the needle."

"Keep off!" shouted Mole.

"Or into your hammock."

"Ha!"

"Yes, remarked the honest sailor; "you sink down in a hammock quite nice."

"You ruffian!" cried the unhappy Mole.

He lowered his chair for a moment, and then pounced upon him.

And then followed a desperate struggle.

Up and down they went, all over the cabin, while Harvey and young Jack looked on in high glee from the companion ladder.

"We've got the twenty-four pound shot," said Harvey. Mole yelled again.

"What say, your honor?" asked one of the sailors.

Mole took advantage to spring up and seize the chair again.

As the sailors retreated, Mole grew valiant and rushed at them. So one of the tars tripped him up, and they made their escape on the deck.

"Please, your honor," said one of them, coming after Jack Harkaway the elder, "he's clean gone."

"He—who?"

"Mr. Mole."

"What has happened to him?"

"He's lost his head, your honor," said the sailor; "as daft as he can be. By Neptune! here he comes like a mad bull. Clear the decks and make room for him. Oh! here's some sport for us."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERILS OF THE OCEAN.

THE next moment Mole rushed on deck, still waving round his head the chair he had taken to protect himself.

The sailors now thought Mole quite mad, and Ben Hawser, seeing the confusion all were in, called his monkey Nero.

"At him, Nero," he said.

The monkey, seeming to understand what his master meant, made a dash at Mr. Mole, and butting him suddenly in the center of the body, he sent him back into his cabin quicker than he expected.

Mr. Mole grew better next morning.

He was not troubled with sea-sickness any more that voyage.

"Strange that you should have been ill, Mr. Mole," said young Jack, who soon descended to his tutor's cabin.

"Very," said Mr. Mole.

"So sea-sick."

"What, Jack?"

"Sea-sick, sir, for such a daring old tar as you."

"You don't suppose it was a sea-sickness, do you, Jack?" said Mr. Mole.

"It looked like it."

"You were never more mistaken, then, let me tell you."

"Dear me!"

"Yes, my dear boy, it was change of air, nothing more."

"Indeed."

"Though that wouldn't have proved much if it really had been sea-sickness, for many bold sailors have been known to be sea-sick every voyage at the start."

"You don't say so!"

"I do, though. Nelson was always sick, so I've heard."

"Why, then, it is rather a thing to be proud of than not."

"If you choose to look at it in that light," said Mr. Mole. "But, of course," he added, modestly, "I don't think of comparing myself to a Nelson."

Just then Jack Harkaway the elder and Harvey stepped up.

They heard the last words.

"Really, Mr. Mole," said Harkaway, "you are such a bashful man."

"So very retiring and diffident," said Harvey.

"For such an intrepid sailor," added Jack.

"Such a daring seaman," continued Harvey.

Mr. Mole hung his head like a young lady when her beauty is being too openly praised.

"Really, gentlemen, gentlemen," he said, "you overpower me. 'Pon my life, I never—really, now."

"The captain would be happy to profit by a hint or two from you on the management of the ship."

"I scarcely think that," murmured the blushing Mole.

And then he swelled up a bit, and put in a modest word for himself.

"The handling of the ship never possessed the same charm for me since I had to take the command in the thick of the hottest fight you ever heard of."

"What?" exclaimed Dick Harvey, astounded.

"I say that navigating a ship in a mere gale is child's play to an old sea lion who has commanded when the vessel has been hulled—raked fore and aft by two Malay pirates."

It took his hearers' breath away.

Mr. Mole could pitch the hatchet better than most men, but they never even heard him venture on such a piece of audacity as this.

The worthy tutor thought that they were lost in admiration, so he piled it on.

"Yes," he said, "I sighted the gun myself that sank one of the scoundrels' ships."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes," said Mole, complacently; "and blew the next one up, and damme! we boarded the third."

"Come, I say, Mr. Mole," said Jack, "gently does it. You said there were only two ships."

"Three—three!"

"You said two," persisted Jack Harkaway.

"My good friend," said Mr. Mole, "you did not hear aright, or you have been indulging in strong waters."

"Hang it, I say——"

"Go on, Mr. Mole," said young Jack, who was enjoying the fun mightily.

"We boarded the third," said Mr. Mole. "I cut down six of the Malays with one stroke of my cutlass."

Dick groaned.

But Mr. Mole continued, not at all disconcerted.

"I broke my cutlass over one of them—they have such thick skulls—and then I went in at them with my fists. Hang me if they didn't go down like skittles! I made a 'royal' every go, as I'm a sinner. I distributed black eyes amongst eight-and-thirty of them—eight-and-thirty! I stood them in a row after the fight and counted them."

The listeners groaned altogether at this.

It was too much even to make young Jack laugh.

"Our victory was complete," said Mr. Mole, in conclusion; "but ever since that day, I never can relish a fight if I have anything less than six to tackle at once."

"Well, I'm browed!" ejaculated Dick.

"The fourth ship of the pirate fleet sheered off when the captain saw me pointing one of our big guns."

"Here comes the Prince of Limbi," said Jack Harkaway; "it's quite a relief."

"I wonder the lies don't choke him," said Dick Harvey.

"Mr. Harkaway, sir," said Monday, coming up at this moment.

"What now, old friend?" said Jack.

Monday pointed up to the sky and shook his head.

"Queer weather."

"Benighted savage," said Mr. Mole, the weather was never more beautiful."

He was right.

At present it was calm and serene enough.

For a sailor afloat almost too serene, for the roughest gales but too often follow such weather.

The day was declining; the sunset was, in truth, very beautiful.

But suddenly a heavy bank of thick black clouds appeared upon the horizon, ready to receive the blood-red sun.

Monday's quick eye had been the first to detect this.

"The Prince of Limbi (as they often used to call Monday in joke) had learned to be weather-wise from his earliest childhood."

Monday had barely spoken when the black clouds seemed to shoot up and darken the whole sky.

Prompt action was wanted now.

"Queer weather this, Mr. Harkaway," said the captain, as Jack approached.

"It will be queerer before long, captain," answered Jack. "I've been in this kind of weather more than once, and the gale will soon be on us."

"What would you do?" demanded the captain.

"Take in the topsail, stow away all spare hampers, and look smart out after your crockery, for the squall will be on us in a brace of shakes."

The captain was rather astounded to hear a landsman speak like this.

A sudden gust of wind sent the ship on to her beam ends.

Then a vivid flash of lightning illuminated the horizon from east to west.

This was followed by a deafening peal of thunder.

"In with the topsail!" roared the captain.

But the tempest drowned his voice.

Young Jack stood near his father, and he looked earnestly up into his face, asking, as plainly as words could have done, if he should go. There was no time for thought.

Young Jack took permission, seeing his father irresolute, and made a lurch at the rigging, just as

Dick Harvey, Monday and a brave-looking sailor made for the same point.

But the youngster was the nimblest of the four.

Like his father, young Jack Harkaway was no milksop.

He was captain of his gymnasium, and he climbed like a monkey.

It was fearful work.

The lightning lighted up the scene with vivid flashes and showed the four climbers mounting the rigging.

Their progress was watched by all in breathless interest.

The sail for a moment hung loosely and then, suddenly bellying out, it caught young Jack a fearful blow that half stunned him.

It would have been all over with him then, but for Monday.

The faithful black's stalwart arm was there, and it pinned the boy to the rigging until he could recover his breath.

They then began to gather in the canvas as fast as they could.

But suddenly a rope by which the sailor was holding parted in his hand and down he went into the raging waves.

It was impossible to save him, nor had they a moment to spare for useless regrets.

Unless the sail was instantly secured, the ship would be lost.

In a short time their task was done.

A second more, however, and the wind burst upon the straining vessel from the opposite quarter, taking her all aback and throwing her upon her beam ends again. The man at the wheel was blown overboard.

A minute more, one despairing cry, heard even above the roar of the tempest, and another unhappy man had gone down forever.

This same lurch sent Mole and several of the crew flying into the lee-scuppers, where a desperate struggle ensued in their endeavors to extricate themselves.

Mole, finding himself in a pool of water, fancied he was overboard; so according to custom in the presence of danger, he shut his eyes and struck out, meaning to swim for life.

But in striking out he punched two of the sailors, who, in spite of the confusion, instinctively punched back.

Now, sailors have hard knuckles, and poor Mole's nose and eyes suffered in consequence.

Meanwhile the three friends in the rigging passed an anxious time.

"Master Jack," said Monday.

"Jack," said Harvey.

"All right," answered Jack, quite reassured at hearing their voices.

So sudden and so violent had been that gale, and so dense was the darkness, that each feared for the safety of the other two.

They dreaded to find their companions had been blown off the yards into the boiling sea, like the brave seaman who had mounted the rigging with them.

The lightning still played about the ship, and the peals of thunder were deafening and incessant.

Jack Harkaway watched for an instant to see that his boy was safe and near his faithful friends.

Then with a murmur of gratitude, he turned to see where he could be of any use.

His quick eye detected the vacated wheel, and by clutching by the rigging, he made for the spot.

Holding on by one hand, he lashed himself to the wheel with the other, for he found a length of line attached to it.

The poor helmsman, an experienced mariner, had foreseen his danger, and was providing against it, when the violent lurch cast him overboard to a watery grave.

Two brave men had gone down in the storm.

"Take in every bit of canvas!" cried the captain. "Square the yards."

The crew, recovered from their momentary confusion, flew about their work with a will.

Jack Harkaway put the helm hard up.

Then every bit of canvas was taken in with great rapidity, young Jack lending such assistance that the crew were amazed.

It did them a very material service.

Every man on board endeavored to rival the lad,

who had upon such short notice become so thorough and so daring a seaman.

They put the ship before the wind, and away she scudded at a rate that was truly amazing, under bare poles.

The rain came down. First in big drops like crown pieces, then in a heavy shower.

The floodgates of the heavens appeared to be suddenly opened to deluge the earth, sea and land.

And thus the storm raged in unabated fury for several hours.

But the longest lane must have a turning, the longest day must come to an end.

At length the fury of the tempest was spent.

The wind lulled.

The boiling sea calmed down.

And the good ship "Prospero" was brought through one of the greatest perils she had ever encountered.

CHAPTER V.

HIGH JINKS ON BOARD.

"ALL hands on deck!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

All hands were piped up.

Then, when all the crew had mustered according to orders, the captain sent a messenger for Mr. and Mrs. Harkaway, young Jack, Harvey, and Monday.

"I hope there's nothing wrong," said Jack Harkaway the elder.

"There can be nothing," said his wife.

"Where is Jack?"

"Here, mamma," said her son, appearing at the cabin door.

"What's the matter?"

"I can't say," replied the boy. "The crew have all been called upon deck."

Harvey, who was reading in a corner, looked up.

"It's all right, I suppose," he said, "unless the captain's jealous."

"What of?"

"You, for helping him as you did. There are some rum people in the world."

"Let's go up."

"You're sure the captain asked for me to go up too," said Emily.

"Sartin, marm," replied the sailor; "he mentioned Mrs. Harkaway in particular."

"It's all right, then," said Jack; "we will come up at once."

Up they all went together, and were received by the captain and the chief officers of the "Prospero" with bows and much ceremony, mingled with great cordiality.

"I hope I have not put you to any inconvenience?"

"None whatever, Captain Rudd," replied Jack; "not the least."

"I've got a duty to perform," said the skipper, "I shall not feel that I have done it until I have thanked you before all the crew for saving our ship."

Jack was staggered.

"You exaggerate our services, Captain Rudd," he said.

"Devil a bit," retorted the captain, "asking your pardon, madam," he added, bowing to Mrs. Harkaway.

"I see him lashed to the wheel, I did, your honor," said one of the crew, "and steering away like a regular A. B."

"And it was these three gallant people who scrambled up the rigging to reef the topsail when many a sailor might have feared to go."

"Young Jack was foremost," said Harvey pushing the boy forward.

The captain took young Jack's hand and shook it heartily.

"I'd give a trifle if you were my son," said he, earnestly. "Master Jack Harkaway has helped to save the ship. So hark you, my men, give him a good old English cheer."

"Hooray!"

"Stop!" cried Captain Rudd. "Take your time from me—hip—hip—hip—"

"Hooray!"

A deafening cheer came from the united throats of the crew of the "Prospero."

It was a comical thing to see the way young Jack took it.

Like his father, Jack junior was not usually

wanting in brass, but his ovation took all his pluck away.

He slunk back by his mother.

Mrs. Harkaway was blushing with pride all the while.

"You must say something, Jack," whispered his father. "You thank them."

"Do it for me," pleaded the bashful young Jack.

"You have taken my boy's breath away," said Jack Harkaway, addressing the captain and crew; "he is not in the habit of being praised so lavishly for doing his duty. I am a happy man this day to hear your cheers for my boy. I want him to be brought up no milksop, but this honor has come earlier upon him than I ever hoped for. I feel prouder than I can express that he should have earned such cheers as yours upon the sea in the profession to which I had at one time devoted my life."

"Damme!" cried Captain Rudd—"asking your pardon, madam—if I didn't know it."

"Every inch a sailor," cried one of the crew.

"Let's give him a cheer, boys," suggested a third enthusiast.

They did, too.

Cheer after cheer rang out, while Jack stood bowing his acknowledgments.

When they dropped off, young Jack stepped forward.

"It was through Monday that I kept up," he said.

"No, no, Mast' Jack," said the faithful Limbian.

"Indeed it was."

Jack the elder stepped up to Monday and took the worthy fellow by the hand.

"Monday," he said, with great warmth, "you have acted nobly to our boy, and made us all love you more than ever."

"Oh, by golly, Mast' Jack," cried Monday, "you pile um on rather too thick, make this poor chile fell precious uncomf'able."

"You'll make poor old Monday blush," said Dick Harvey.

"You're an incorrigible joker," said Jack, who couldn't help laughing himself.

"Here's one more, then, for the black prince," cried the enthusiastic sailor before mentioned.

"Take the time from me."

"One—two—three! Hip—hip—hip—"

"Hurrah!"

Captain Budd came up to Monday and shook him heartily by the hand.

"I am proud to shake hands, Mr. Monday," said the skipper. "I never met a bolder heart under black skin or white skin."

Another ringing cheer greeted the captain's short but earnest speech.

"Now," said Dick Harvey, going forward, "it's my turn to palaver."

"Hear! hear!"

"I'm not going to say that I am accustomed to public speaking—"

"No need to," said Jack senior; "any fool can see that."

This caused a laugh.

"That's why you perceived it so readily," retorted Harvey.

A loud laugh rewarded this piece of impudence.

"Go on."

"Speak on, sir," from the crew.

"I was going to observe," said Dick, with his sham-serious look, that told his friends who knew him that he was bent upon foolery, "that notwithstanding the inclement weather and the price of coals, whereas, as we might say in a manner of speaking and so forth, that in my humble estimation, in spite of whatever my friend with the red nose may say to the contrary, I may reiterate, without repetition or circumlocution, my decided and emphatic opinion that any stick is good enough to beat a dog with, and that it is a poor beast which never rejoiceth, so that, all things considered, we may rest assured that our worthy and loved friend Mr. Mole has a pair of splendid black eyes!"

Here the mischievous Dick pointed suddenly to the cabin stairs.

All eyes turned in that direction at once.

There stood Mr. Mole with his cotton night-cap on, his damaged nose plastered up, and his eyes as black as sloes.

This was the result of his scramble in the lee scuppers.

He did not know at first that he was observed, not having rightly heard Harvey's concluding words.

Dick profited by this, you may be sure.

"Now, then, shipmates," he said, "three cheers for Mr. Mole's black peepers!"

"One—two—three—hooray!"

Mr. Mole saw it now.

He stepped hurriedly back, and in so doing he missed his footing, and went bump, bump, bump down to the bottom of the companion ladder, whence he scrambled into his berth, and was seen no more that day.

"And now," said Dick, "one word more. I want Captain Rudd to let me stand you as many cans of grog as you can take without losing your sea legs, to drink the health of our friend here, young Jack Harkaway!"

The skipper gave his consent readily enough. And Dick gave his money.

There were high jinks that day on board the good ship "Prospero."

Dick Harvey played the fiddle in a way that made the sailors all but worship him, and young Jack danced a college hornpipe with such a rattle that every man's feet were seen upon the go.

On board the good ship "Prospero" were two passengers who made themselves very agreeable.

These gentlemen were entered upon the passenger list as Mr. Percival and Henry Webb.

Mr. Webb was a very simple young man, with long fair hair and spectacles.

His hair and whiskers were of a peculiar vegetable tint, and among the crew he was never spoken of by his name, but as "Carrots."

A very odd young man was he, and his chief characteristic was an unmeaning grin, which caused the sailors to christen him "Soft Tommy."

He was apparently a young man of weak intellect.

Indeed, so it was understood on board, and Mr. Percival was tacitly set down as his keeper.

But Mr. Webb's softness was like the peculiarities of Hamlet in the play; there was method in his madness.

Mr. Isaac Mole cultivated the acquaintance of these two of his fellow passengers, and in his fashion made himself very agreeable to them.

"Your illness doesn't affect your strength," said Mole, with a patronizing air.

"Oh, it does, though," replied Mr. Webb, with a grin. "I'm as weak as a rat."

"How very odd," said Mr. Mole.

"Very; isn't it?"

"I've always noticed," said Mr. Mole, addressing Mr. Percival mysteriously, "that people who are weak here"—tapping his forehead—"are singularly muscular."

"You must be very muscular, then," said the weak-witted passenger.

"Well," said Mr. Mole, feeling his biceps, "not to say muscular."

"Oh, you are."

"I'm not to say feeble."

"You look like an athlete," said Mr. Percival. "Doesn't he?"

"That he does," returned the weak-witted Webb. "A sort of gladiator."

Mr. Webb grinned.

"I should think you excelled in gymnastic exercises," said Mr. Percival.

"I could always hold my own."

"And handle your fives well?"

"I don't quite understand," said Mr. Mole.

"This sort of thing."

And Mr. Webb sparred idiotically, punching wildly at an imaginary enemy.

"Have you ever had the gloves on?" said Mr. Mole, elevating his eyebrows in some surprise.

"Never."

Mr. Mole grew very much anecdotal at this.

"When I was a younger man, I was considered good," he said.

"Indeed?"

"That I was."

"I suppose among private people only?" said Mr. Percival.

"Well, no; not altogether," said Mr. Mole.

"Indeed?"

The apparent interest of Silly Webb and his

keeper encouraged Mr. Mole to recitals of his prowess, which rather astonished his hearers.

"You may have heard of Tom Sayers," said Mr. Mole, "a professional boxer?"

"Oh, yes."

"Champion of England, wasn't he?" added Mr. Percival.

"He was. Well," said Mr. Mole, modestly, "Tom Sayers used to say that I was the quickest member he ever tackled. One, two, three; pom, pom, pom."

And here he sparred round and fibbed away as though he had got an adversary in chancery.

The two fellow passengers gave a sort of moan of admiration at Mr. Mole's style and finish.

"You used to give it to Tom Sayers?" said Silly Webb.

"Tom Sayers was very clever with the gloves," said Mr. Mole, "but he used to lose his temper, because he never could touch me."

"You don't mean it?"

"Yes, I do, though," said Mr. Mole, encouraged by the evident impression he had made. "'Now look here, Mr. Mole,' Tom used to say, 'play light.'"

"You used to punish him, then?"

"Sometimes I used to hammer him a bit; but I must do him the justice to say, that he took his punishment very quietly; in fact, he was rather afraid of me."

Silly Webb laughed with delight.

"I shouldn't like to put up my fists to you, Mr. Mole," he said.

"Why not?" asked Mr. Mole, with conscious pride.

"You frighten me so."

"I'm not very dangerous," said Mr. Mole, modestly.

"And would you show me how to fight, just a little?"

"If Mr. Percival likes."

Mr. Webb looked towards his keeper for consent, but not quite as vacantly as usual.

There almost appeared a twinkle of merry devilment there which looked very different to his accustomed vacant stare.

"Be careful," said Mr. Percival, smiling.

"All right."

"And play light," said his keeper, with emphasis.

"You hear that, Mr. Mole?" remarked Silly Webb.

"I hear," replied Mr. Mole, with his patronizing air; but I almost thought—and he chuckled quietly—"that Mr. Percival meant it for you."

Then they began to spar.

Poor Silly Webb stood up, facing the redoubtable Mole as though he feared every moment to receive a taste of that horseplay which, according to Mr. Mole, had been so liberally dealt out to poor Tom Sayers.

Mr. Mole stood up with his legs wide apart, like Mr. Pickwick going down the slide. In other respects, his attitude was not bad.

He kept his left well out, and his guard high.

But Silly Webb still persisted in revolving his arms like a girl does, when she is pretending to spar.

"Not like that," said Mr. Mole; "this way. There; keep your body well back and hit with your—"

Crack!

Silly Webb dropped him an unexpected stinger upon the chest, which made him cough and splutter in a remarkable way, considering the apparent weakness of the demented creature.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Mole. "How very odd that you should have touched me!"

The weak-witted one went off again whirligigging his arms in the same feminine attitude of pugilism.

Crack! crack!

All of a sudden Mr. Mole got it again; but this time it was a brace of smart slaps in the face, that seemed to knock his head to one side.

"That is a London 'postman's knock,'" said Silly Webb.

"Most extraordinary!" said poor Mole, blinking, and rubbing his damaged parts.

"Very," said Mr. Percival; "and yet I have often seen it before."

"Seen what?"

"That sort of thing."

"What, this?" asked Silly Webb.

And off he went sparring again at Mole, who stepped out of the way of mischief very nimbly.

"No; a thoroughly scientific boxer dodged and surprised by a man who did not know how to hold up his hands decently."

"So have I," said Mr. Mole, breathing hard.

"Indeed!"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Mole. "You may have heard of Heenan?"

"That fought Morrissey?"

"Yes. Well, you'd hardly believe that, although I used to give him many a drubbing—"

"You did?"

"Many and many a drubbing, he positively used to touch me now and again."

His hearers held up their hands in amazement.

"Never!"

"Fact, I assure you," said Mr. Mole, modestly; "but then I used to let him have it severely after."

"Let us have another turn, please, Mr. Mole," said Silly Webb.

"Very good," said Mr. Mole; "but mind I don't hurt you."

And then, as they stepped forward again, Mole, who was smarting from the taps he had received, made a sudden effort to drop one into his "pupil."

Silly Webb guarded the blow, and quick as lightning popped in two smart smacks upon Mole's cheeks again.

"Come I say!" cried Mole, "you should not do that so quick."

"All right, Mr. Mole."

And Silly Webb dropped them in then just where he pleased.

"One!" he cried out, landing a stinger in the ribs.

"Oh!" cried Mole.

"Two!"

This was dropped heavily upon the muscle of the right arm, and made poor Mole sing out.

"Three!" cried Silly Webb, laughing; "now for the bread basket."

It was most remarkable how straight from the shoulder Silly Webb hit this time.

It doubled Mr. Mole up, but Silly Webb peppered him about the face and head generally so sharply now, that he soon knocked him straight again.

"One!" cried Silly Webb, popping them in now rapidly, "two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight, and a good one for—"

"Murder! murder!" cried Mole.

He didn't wait for nine.

The number eight was such a stinger on the nose, that he saw Fourth of July fireworks, and could not stand any more.

Still crying out "Murder!" he bolted off as if the devil was at his heels, while the other two dropped into a seat, and rolled about laughing until the tears came into their eyes.

"What fun!" cried Percival.

"Didn't he run!"

"And how!"

"By jingo, he did."

"But don't you think he may begin to have doubts?"

"Of what?"

"Of us and whom we are."

"Yes, we have a desperate game to play here, and we must be cautious."

"If our character and calling were once known, we should find it more difficult to catch our men, they both being desperate ruffians."

"Yes, and our instructions seem to imply that the lives of Harkaway and his friends may be sacrificed."

"Well, then, let caution be our pass-word," said the two strange men, clasping each other's hands.

* * * * *

Two days later. Time, five A. M.

Young Jack Harkaway stood upon deck beside the look-out man.

He had a reason for this early rising.

One of the crew had told him that they would in all probability sight land this day.

Dick Harvey had a very fine gold watch—a repeater, which he had frequently promised young Jack. Dick had made a stipulation with young Jack that he should have it if he should be the first to sight land.

"You promise, Mr. Harvey?"

"Yes."

"Mind, I shall keep you to it."

"All right, my hearty," said Dick, laughing.

"Lend me your glass," said young Jack to the look-out man, "and I'll give you some baccy."

"I'll lend you my glass, Master Jack," said the sailor, "without any bribery."

"But you won't refuse the baccy," said young Jack, slily.

"Not if it would offend you, young gentleman."

"Then it would."

So the tobacco and glass at once changed hands.

Jack raised the glass to his eye.

In a minute he gave a loud shout of exultation.

"Hurrah! I've done it!"

"What?"

"I'm first," answered young Jack, springing down, and, seizing a speaking trumpet, he shouted in Harvey's ear:

"Lead ahead, your honor!"

CHAPTER VI.

LAND AGAIN.

"BRAVO, young Jack," cried Harvey; "you have sharp eyes, and have won the wager."

Soon after this all on board sighted land.

When the good ship "Prospero" heaved to, the custom-house officers came on board.

Mr. Mole perceived them in the boat, so he hurried on deck. He was determined to show them what a man could do by reading.

He had picked up his notions of American idioms in English novels, and polished himself off with a digest of the American humorists.

Artemus Ward, Bret Hart, Orpheus C. Kerr, and the like, were his masters.

"Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, with conscious pride, "it has been my happy lot in bygone years to teach——"

"My young ideas how to shoot," interrupted Jack; "yes, that's true."

"It is never too late to learn."

"True."

"This journey is destined to prove a source of wonderful information to us."

"I hope so."

"I know so," said Mr. Mole, emphatically, "if we know how to sift the pure metal of instruction from the quartz of generalities."

"Quarts of generalities?" echoed Jack, shamming stupidity; "quarts is a liquid measure."

"Quartz," corrected Mr. Mole. "A figure of speech. I will explain."

"No, pray don't," said Jack.

"Nay, but I will," said Mr. Mole, misinterpreting Jack's interruption. "I will address the officers coming on board."

Jack walked away.

"I think old Mole is more cracked than ever," he said.

Mr. Mole put himself in the way of the customs officers as they mounted the ship's side and gained the deck.

"Good-day, boss," said he to the foremost of the officers.

The officer started.

"I beg your pardon."

"No offense," said Mole, graciously. "You come to examine the luggage?"

The officer nodded assent.

At the same time his manner showed some surprise at the address of the passenger.

"You do—of course," said Mr. Mole, looking round to Jack as if to say, "What do you think of my penetration?"

"Not very difficult to guess," said the officer, smiling.

"No, boss—go it, my hunky boy."

"What?"

The customs officer stared at Mole.

As for Jack, he was not a whit less surprised than the new-comer. But Mole was not at all disconcerted.

He took it all as a compliment.

He imagined that the slangy locutions he had read in the American novels published in Cockayne, and the curious phraseology of Artemus Ward, were fair samples of American conversation.

Poor Mole!

He little thought that the Americans, as a rule, speak the mother tongue with more purity of idiom and accent than two-thirds of Britishers.

Jack felt rather ashamed of Mole, as he fell back and joined Harvey, who was bringing young Jack forward.

"Poor old Mole has been indulging again," he said.

"Has he? That's too bad."

"Yes, and his weakness has assumed a new phase."

"What is it?"

"He's taken to talking slang."

"Slang? Poor old fellow!"

"Yes."

"Never!"

"Yes; and what's more, he seems proud of it."

"The deuce he does!"

"Well, he just now spoke to the customs officer who boarded us as 'boss,' and called him 'my hunky boy.' I felt quite ashamed, for the officer was evidently a thorough gentleman."

"He must have thought old Mole daft."

"Wouldn't be far out."

A few moments later, the officer took advantage of the captain's presence to express his opinion pretty freely.

"He is not dangerous, I suppose, captain?"

"Who?"

"That poor old fellow," said the officer, lowering his voice and pointing to Mole.

"Dangerous?" said the captain, with a puzzled laugh. "He dangerous?—not he."

"He ought to be kept away, though," said the officer. "Let his keeper stay beside him. He is certainly wrong."

"Wrong! What in?"

"The upper story."

"You think so?"

"It's a fact."

Mole heard this, and then for the first time he began to suspect that all was not quite right.

So he moved away.

But he didn't guess at the truth.

"This is a mixed nation," he said to himself; "and no doubt this officer is not a native, probably an Englishman."

While the preparations continued for going ashore, Harvey got Mr. Mole into a corner and questioned him if the officer understood him.

"You shall soon have an opportunity of gratifying your reasonable curiosity," answered Mr. Mole, with conscious pride. Dick foresaw a joke might be got out of this vanity of old Mole's, and he was never one to spoil sport.

CHAPTER VII.

STRANGE GUESTS AT THE HOTEL.

JACK and his friends took a handsome set of rooms for their party at the best hotel, one of the largest in the town.

As soon as they were settled down, Dick and Jack got Mr. Mole aside, and began a little lark of their own.

"You had better order dinner, Mr. Mole," said Jack.

"I?" said Mr. Mole, in some surprise.

"Yes, you had better do it."

"You know how to talk to them better than we do," suggested Dick, slily.

"Well, well," returned Mr. Mole, "perhaps there is something in that."

So they called the waiter.

Mr. Mole referred a little anxiously to a sort of dictionary he carried, and then he opened fire on the waiter.

"Wall, stranger, we should like a meal, some. What provender ken you propose?"

"Provender?" said the waiter. "Meal, sir?—dinner, sir?"

"Yes, siree," returned Mr. Mole, watching the effect of his technicalities upon his former pupils.

"Provender, dinner; that's so."

"Oh! indeed, sir."

He was a well-trained waiter, and he did not dare to laugh.

Neither Jack nor Harvey showed the faintest signs of a smile, so he was forced to take it all in sober earnest.

"Clear soup, fish," repeated Mole, after the

waiter, "boiled turkey. I reckon that they are average fixin's."

"Yes, sir, just so."

"But I guess you have a tall thing in feeds denominated about these parts as pumpkin pie, with a modicum of apple sass."

"Pumpkin pie, sir?"

"That's so, sireebob."

The waiter was staggered.

This was the lowest slang of New York, and had long since grown stale.

He could not naturally understand such language from people who gave every outward appearance of high respectability.

"You seem surprised," said Mole, gravely construing the waiter's looks after his own fashion.

"I, sir; no, sir."

"But you see we Britishers lick creation in taste."

"Yes, sir," stammered the waiter, scarcely knowing whether to be flattered by the visitor's condescension or not.

"I for one," continued Mole, in the same lofty strain, "play second fiddle to no breathing cuss in belly culture. I'm known, in point of fact, as the all-fired snorter of gastronomy."

Harvey and Jack could no longer contain themselves.

They burst into a boisterous fit of laughter, during which the waiter made off in a rage.

He was puzzled all through this singular interview.

Now he had, he thought, discovered the key to it all.

The clerical-looking old gentleman was making a laughing stock of him.

"He's getting at me," said the indignant waiter, who was born within sound of Bow Bells, it would appear. "I ain't a-going to stand still for a psalm-smiting old duffer like that to guy me."

Jack and Harvey laughed until the tears ran down their cheeks.

"You had better dry up, Mole."

"Sir, I shall not dry up."

"Yes," said Harvey; "hold your tongue."

"I'd have you to know," began Mole, loftily, "that I——"

"Don't bother!" interrupted Jack, impatiently. "Enough's as good as a feast, and you'll spoil our grub if you're not quiet."

"Harkaway!"

"Be quiet, Mole."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that you you are making a fool of yourself. Don't you see that the waiter looks on you as a madman?"

"I see nothing of the kind. He is stricken with surprise at my great knowledge of this country."

"Very well, keep your eyes shut," retorted Harkaway, growing vexed with the gnawings of hunger; "only don't spoil our dinner now you've had your say out, so please shut up."

Mr. Mole was dumbfounded—shut up.

He made a faint remonstrance, but finding it was of no avail, he very wisely held his peace.

"The table d'hôte is on now, sir," said the Cockney waiter.

"Very well."

"Will you join it?"

"What do you think, Dick?"

"As you please."

"Let's ask Emily. Hilda is yet too unwell to meet company."

The table d'hôte was composed of a mixture of most of the nations of both continents, Europe and America.

There were French, English, Americans, Spaniards, Italians, German, Dutch, Russians, Cubans, Mexicans, Portuguese, and Danes.

Opposite the Harkaway party sat one or two very remarkable-looking persons.

One was a middle-aged man, with a handsome face and fine military presence.

A fine old veteran, who had faced the battle and the breeze often enough.

Then, next him, sat a man in a fur-collared coat, who was an Armenian, and reputed to be enormously rich; a very peculiar-looking man, with a beard like Pharaoh in the pictures.

And then there was a sailor-like man, who had a peculiar cast of countenance, and an uneasy, roving

ing expression, that made you uncomfortable at sitting beside him. He was a one-armed man.

He had a manner of regarding everybody, the first time that he saw them, as though he instinctively regarded them as enemies.

Dick Harvey called the waiter and made a few inquiries.

"That gentleman with the Persian turban is enormously rich, sir," said the Cockney waiter, confidentially; "he's got whole pints of diamonds; and that one there, with only one arm—"

"Ha!" said Dick, with a start, "how hard he's looking this way."

"I don't like him; I hope he has not overheard," said the waiter. "Perhaps he knows you, sir."

Indeed, it would almost have looked like it, for the subject of their remarks was staring at them with all his eyes.

And very remarkable eyes they were, too; deeply sunken, black as sloes, and glistening like brilliants from the depths of their sockets.

Suddenly he perceived that his fixed gaze was evidently attracting notice.

So he turned to his right-hand neighbor, and was immediately buried in a deeply interesting conversation.

"Do you see that man?" asked Dick to Mr. Mole, pointing to the one-armed man.

"Yes."

"When he's not looking, watch him."

"What for?"

"To let me hear if you remember him."

Mr. Mole walked round the room, and tried to get a better view of the person in question.

But he could not manage it, for every time that he moved, down went the stranger's head.

The one-armed man was a very singular-looking person.

A restless-eyed man, who never by any chance looked you fairly in the face.

His companion was noticeable from his huge person.

He stood considerably over six feet in height, and he was more than proportionately broad across the shoulders.

His head was round, and was covered with flaxen woolly curls; yet the beard he wore was black.

It would almost appear that he dyed his hair.

Evidently, this mammoth man had very weak eyes, for he wore blue spectacles.

The one-armed warrior led his companion down stairs to the smoking-saloon.

It was empty.

He gave a sharp glance round, and ascertained that they were alone.

"Come here," said he, in a voice of authority, to his giant companion. "Now, tell me, did you see them?"

"I do not understand you, signor."

"You keep neither your eyes nor your ears open," said his superior, angrily.

"What mean you?"

"Had you only looked across the table, you would have seen faces you know but too well."

"Whose—whose?" cried the giant, impatiently.

"Why, in the fiend's name, do you speak in riddles? Do you laugh at me?"

"I'm in no humor for laughing," retorted the other. "He was there, facing you."

The giant stared at his friend.

"He! Who?"

"Who but the man of all others that I loathe and abhor, the bane of my life—Harkaway, whose life shall yet be in my grasp."

The giant started.

"If you are correct in your man, this hand shall help you, even if he had a thousand lives."

And the giant clenched his big hand.

"It is true; and all our old enemies are with him—Harvey, the black, and the drunken old tutor, Mole."

"And I failed to see them, all through these accursed spectacles which you insist upon my wearing; they blind me as effectually as my poor old comrade, Barboni."

"Stop that; none of your reminiscences; they are not of the most agreeable."

"But tell me, did they know you?"

"No."

"Or me?"

"I think not," was the reply. "Harvey—curse

him!—stared as though he remembered me, but he was not sure."

"I wish I had seen him," said the giant, apparently subduing his fierce emotions by a powerful effort. "Once let me close upon him or his friend Harkaway—aye, or any of his accursed crew—and if I let them escape me, may I die upon the wheel. I'll not be blinded!" he added, passionately, tearing off his spectacles. "I shall be caught like a rat in a trap."

And when the blue glasses were away, his fierce black eyes lit up his face, and showed how moved the man was with passion.

"Well done, Redgrave! well done!" said his companion, with a sneer. "Well done! Play the fool, indulge your melodramatic bravado, if you like, and mount the scaffold."

"Silence!" thundered the other, menacingly.

But his companion was not easily alarmed.

"Do it as much as you like," he said, "if it pleases you to risk your life; it makes me sick. I don't care that while you are with me you should blow the whole game and let them recognize me, Mr. Redgrave."

"I am Toro, the brigand," interrupted the giant.

"Hush!" exclaimed the other, in alarm.

"I'll not hush, Hunston," thundered the robber Toro; "I'll not be badgered and bullied any longer by you. I'll have this Harkaway's life for causing the destruction of our band in Naples!"

"Bah!"

"I will, I say; and his boy's too!"

"Now you are talking more like common sense," said Hunston, with a vicious smile. "Kill Harkaway, and there's an end to everything. Kill his boy, if you like, and let the father know that the brat died in slow torture, and then you earn a noble vengeance."

"Right," said Toro; "right, Hunston."

"Hush; sink the name, I tell you. Look, I think we are watched."

Hunston suddenly perceived, for the first time, they were not alone.

The curtains, which shut the verandah off from the smoking-room, were drawn aside, and two men entered.

They were Silly Webb and his keeper.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.

"Come along, please," said Silly Webb.

"I'm coming."

And then Mr. Percival stopped short, apparently only just noticing that they were not the only persons present.

"Hush, Mr. Webb," he said. "Don't you see those gentlemen?"

Toro the brigand stepped up to Mr. Webb, and confronted him with a fierce air.

"How long have you been listening behind the curtains?" he demanded, menacingly.

"Listening?"

"Aye, listening."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Webb; "what a very singular remark to make."

Toro clutched him savagely by the arm.

"Don't attempt to play the fool with me," he cried, raising his big fist.

It was strange to see with what seeming ease the supposed feeble Webb threw the giant suddenly off.

"Don't you get up to tricks," he said.

"What?" thundered Toro.

He advanced again upon Silly Webb.

But Mr. Percival stepped between them.

"Stand back," he cried.

Then, after looking fixedly at Toro for a moment, he said, coolly:

"Pray, don't be so violent, my good sir; moderate your anger, and don't excite my patient."

"Patient?" echoed Hunston. "Your patient?"

"Yes; can't you see?"

"Then he tapped his forehead significantly with his forefinger.

"Cracked," whispered Hunston; "oh, I see. Poor devil!"

"Well, he's weak," responded Mr. Percival, "and I can't have him excited, for he is very dangerous."

"Dangerous, the deuce!"

"And if he were to bite——"

"You don't mean——"

"Indeed, I do," replied Mr. Percival. "I've known two men to get hydrophobia as surely from him as if he were a mad dog."

They fell back.

Even the fearless Toro felt uncomfortable at this.

Such is the very natural horror of hydrophobia.

"Excuse my excitable friend," said Hunston. "He actually fancied you were listening behind the curtain."

The other laughed.

"Oh! dear, no! we were taking the air upon the balcony—nothing more. It was a whim of my patient's; and we are obliged to humor him, you know."

"Of course."

They passed out of the room, and as Webb neared Toro, he gave a sudden start as though about to spring and bite, whereupon the giant jumped back affrightedly.

He would not mind the biggest enemy you could pit him against, but the fancied risk of hydrophobia frightened him.

Webb and Percival went up to their rooms.

"What do you think of the two beauties we have just left?" asked Percival.

"I think they are desperate men, and we must put Harkaway and his party on their guard."

"How?"

"By an anonymous letter to them. But we have probably missed the pigeon and shot the crow this journey."

"How?"

"Why, by dropping on to Hunston and his blackguard pal, when we were on the hunt after Emmerson the murderer."

"Still we must look after Harkaway and his son's safety."

"We must, and promptly, too, for Emmerson, although a thief, a forger, a murderer, is not, in point of fact, a greater villain than Hunston. He will have to be looked after first, and then——"

"But how about Mr. Harkaway and his party?"

"They are in danger, no doubt; great danger."

"From Hunston?"

"Yes; and from his colossal friend to."

"Well, I should be sorry for my part to see harm come to them, for they appear very decent people, and young Jack seems a brave and jolly lad. But what can we do?"

"Warn them."

"And betray ourselves? Impossible!"

"Why?"

"Nothing must be done by us which would in any way risk the keeping up of the strictest incognito. Emmerson, the man we are after, is as keen a blade as you will meet with, and after taking the trouble to disguise ourselves and ship in false names, it will not do to risk blowing the whole game because we have fallen across these people."

"True."

"Then I see no way."

"I do. Drop them an anonymous letter to put them on their guard."

"That's the notion, and it shall be done forthwith; it is our duty to save their lives if possible."

* * * * *

Meanwhile Hunston paced up and down the smoking-saloon in the greatest excitement.

"This puts an end to my little Cuban business," he said to Toro.

"Why the end?" demanded the burly giant.

"It is this that has brought Harkaway out, depend upon it."

"Perhaps."

"I feel sure of it."

"Ha! you have so long enjoyed the property that you begin to regard it as your own forever and ever."

"True; and shall I now be cheated out of it?"

"Never; you must keep it, for it will supply us both with money."

"So say I; but saying is not enough—we must act—aye, and that promptly, too, or this income, already reduced to one-third of its original value through the insurrection, will glide from our hands altogether."

"What's to be done?"

"Let us think."

Toro paced the room impatiently, while Hunston sat upon a couch in silent meditation.

Presently Toro stopped short, and said, abruptly:

"If Harkaway died suddenly, what then?"

"Useless."

"Why?"

"Worse than useless," returned Hunston.

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this," replied Hunston; "the day that Jack Harkaway died, the property would pass to the next of kin, and the agency would pass to other hands than those of Ostani, the secretary of the late lamented Don Jose."

Toro burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"Poor Don Jose!"

"Aye; poor Don Jose!" chimed in Hunston.

"His connection with me, when I took the false name of Ostani, was not fortunate for him."

And they both laughed in chorus at it as a capital joke.

The Cuban agent of Harkaway's father had some years before made Hunston's acquaintance.

Thinking him a political refugee, he had taken him to his heart.

But soon the agent died in a way that was as mysterious as it was sudden.

The papers which were found after the Cuban gentleman's death appointed Ostani his successor in the management of Mr. Harkaway's property.

So far Hunston had triumphed.

How long his success was to last remains to be seen.

"I have it," said Toro, presently, sending his huge fist on the table with a force that nearly split it in two.

"What?"

"Harkaway's life must be taken, and that quickly."

"No, his boy must die."

"What do you mean?"

"Mean?" echoed Hunston, fiercely. "Why, this; we must spare Harkaway's life, but we can torture him through this brat—this boy of his. Yes, yes, Toro, kill the brat when you can."

"It shall be done."

"Aye; and so all purposes are served. We shall be secure, and when the boy is dead, we will condemn the hated Harkaway to a living death, as our prisoner. What think you, Toro?"

And Hunston's eyes sparkled with vicious hate.

"You agree to my proposal, and will be guided by me?"

"Yes," said Toro.

"Your hand upon it?"

"There."

And this brace of worthies shook hands with as much fervor as two thoroughly honest men might have done. The door just then opened, and a negro servant entered the smoking-saloon.

"Is dar one of you gemmen as calls himself Webb?"

"No," said Toro.

"Get out," added the other.

The colored gentleman's dignity was touched. So he pretended not to hear, or not to understand the insolent command, but looked about the room for something which was apparently rather difficult to find.

"Go."

It was Hunston who spoke. The negro still looked on; but his search was just as unproductive as before.

"Get out," thundered the irritable giant, "before I break your neck!"

And then, without so much as allowing the negro the bare time to obey, he seized him by the nape of the neck with one hand, and thumped his woolly head with the other.

A nigger's head is proverbially thick, but the giant's hand came like a battering ram against it, and it made him wink again.

"Oho!" yelled the negro. "Murder! murder!"

Toro was just in the humor for brutality, so he clouted away merrily. The negro yelled. But the harder the poor wretch cried, the harder the brutal Toro hit.

The negro wriggled and struggled, and, suddenly jerking himself free, he butted with his head, and catching the doughty giant in the pit of the stomach, sent him staggering back, gasping.

Toro was only staggered for one instant, how-

ever. Then he rushed wildly at the negro, full of murderous intent.

Had he caught the black man then, it would have gone hard with him. But the nigger dodged him nimbly enough. Twice he eluded his pursuer cleverly, but the third time Hunston stopped him, and Toro, throwing out his brawny arms, caught him in a regular bear hug. He did not hit this time. He only squeezed.

The negro yelled, "Oh, massa! massa!" and then gasped. Suddenly a loud voice at Toro's elbow exclaimed:

"Stop that!"

Toro looked sharply round.

It was Harkaway who stood before him.

"What are you about?" said Jack, sternly.

"Do you want to murder the man?"

"Be off," retorted Toro. "You, above all others, should not interfere. If you are wise, go!"

"Oho!" cried the unhappy negro. "Murder!"

The giant gave him another squeeze.

"Will you desist?" cried Jack Harkaway, all his old pluck mounting to his brave heart.

"No," cried the giant, fiercely.

"I shall strike if you do not, so I warn you."

Toro's only reply was to squeeze again, eliciting a groan of anguish from the miserable negro.

Harkaway clenched his fists, and dashing forward, gave Toro two fearful blows upon the chest. The disguised brigand staggered back.

The negro, freed by the act, jumped behind Harkaway. The giant, recovering almost immediately from the shock, made a rush at Harkaway. Our old friend Jack stood well prepared.

But the noise had brought a number of people to the saloon, and Hunston, stepping in before his burly comrade, seized him by the arm and gave him a timely word of warning.

"Fool!" he said, in a low voice, "would you ruin all? Come with me, or all will be lost."

So saying, he half dragged, half coaxed, the brigand Toro out of the room.

CHAPTER IX.

INTRODUCES CÆSAR HANNIBAL AUGUSTUS CONSTANTINE JEX.

THE skirmish in the smoking saloon created quite a sensation. Most of the people applauded Jack Harkaway for his defence of the negro, but not all. The Americans and the English present were delighted with Harkaway, for they could but admire the courage of the man in attacking such a huge ruffian as Toro. But the Cubans present—several—condemned him for taking the part. Conscious, however, of having only done his duty, this did not affect Harkaway.

As for the poor negro, his gratitude took the most extravagant and grotesque forms. He could not sufficiently acknowledge the goodness of his champion.

"I'm berry much 'fraid," he said, "dat man'll look out for you, sar, and give you 'toko,' sar."

"You have nothing to fear for me," returned Jack Harkaway. "I can take care of myself, and give him in return what you call 'toko.'"

"Golly, massa, dat you can. I hope you give one—two for him nob next time," said the negro.

"You keep out of his way, though," said Harkaway.

"You make him smell agony, massa," laughed the negro. "My! wnat a big crack you did gib him!"

"I hope so."

"Dat's so," responded the negro.

"Hurt him, think?"

"Not berry much like—only nearly killed him."

"I don't think that—not that I should mind a great deal," said Harkaway; "it would be ridding the world of a murderous ruffian."

Dick Harvey just then came in with a letter in his hand.

"Well, Dick," said Jack, "what's the matter? Have you heard of the row?"

A few words of explanation ensued.

"Just my luck," said Harvey; "I always manage to drop in after the opera is over."

"No matter this time, Dick," said Harkaway, smiling.

"And so this is the darkey?" added Harvey.

The nigger swelled up like a pouter pigeon, and expanded his chest.

"I am de pusson ob color," he said, with withering emphasis.

"Just so."

"De obligated indiiddle," added he.

"And what," asked Dick, "what may be the name of de obligated indiiddle? Let's hear it, old man."

"My name, sar, am Cæsar Hannibal Augustus Constantine Jex."

"Phew!" cried Dick, laughing, "that's a snorter."

He thought then, for the first time, of the letter which he brought in his hand.

"Your American friends have found you out soon, Jack," he said.

"Why?"

"A letter for you."

"You don't say so?"

"I do, though, and here it is."

"Strange," said Harkaway, musingly; "I know no one here, nor do I know the writing even. I wonder who it can be from."

Dick laughed.

"You are like Dundreary, I suppose."

"I—why?"

"Because you can set all wondering at rest in a crack, if you open the letter."

Harkaway smiled.

He opened the letter and glanced carelessly over it.

But his attention was fixed at once in a way he certainly had not counted upon. Dick Harvey watched his friend's face anxiously.

"Is there anything wrong, Harkaway?" he asked.

"Well, I hardly know; but you are certainly very wrong."

"How?"

"Why, I've read the letter, and am still wondering who it can be from."

"Why?"

"Because," said Harkaway, "there is no signature."

"Anonymous?"

"Yes."

Dick made a grimace.

"Nasty, ugly things, anonymous letters."

"They are," said Harkaway, seriously, "and this one is not less ugly or less nasty than the rest of them."

He handed it to Harvey, who ran his eye rapidly down it. He was not less astonished than Harkaway had been. This was the letter which occasioned so much surprise and uneasiness:

"Be on your guard. You are in great danger here from an old and much-to-be-dreaded enemy. Hunston and a creature of his you well know are in the hotel under assumed names."

"Be on your guard night and day. The writer of this is not able to see you personally, as it is of vital importance that he should remain unknown. Yet do not neglect this warning, and again I say, be on your guard night and day."

"What do you think of that?" asked Harvey.

"I scarcely know what to think," was the reply.

"Do you believe it possible, Jack?"

Harkaway paused to reflect before replying.

"I should say, Harvey," he answered, "that it was very improbable if it were argued upon reasoning grounds solely, but yet—"

"Yet you believe it?"

"Well, I do."

"And so do I."

"I'm not a superstitious man, Dick," said Harkaway, "but then I am half inclined to believe that there is a kind of fatality in our running foul of this Hunston at every turn!"

"How wonderfully his life has been mixed up in our career."

"Wonderfully, indeed," replied Harvey.

"Dick, we must not neglect this warning. It may be a trick; there may not be the slightest foundation of truth in the whole history; but still we must consider it for safety as being as true as gospel."

"Just my opinion," said Harvey; "forewarned, forearmed."

CHAPTER X.

HUNSTON dragged his burly companion by sheer force along the passages of the hotel up to their own apartments. Then, once in, he slammed to the door, locked it, and withdrew the key.

"Are you mad, Toro?" he exclaimed, passionately. "Are you a fool, thus to bring down the eyes of the whole house upon us, when everything depends upon our lying snug?"

The giant gave a grunt of impatience.

"Don't talk to me," he said. "Are we children to be thus badgered and beaten and insulted?"

"You provoked it," said Hunston.

"Why does he always spring up in our path to gibe and twit us with his success in all he does or touches? I tell you, Hunston," he cried, with a passionate oath, "I shall never rest until I have had Harkaway's hated throat in my clutches, until I have felt him wriggling here in my grip, and pressed the life slowly out of him."

Hunston laughed scornfully at this outburst.

"Words, words," he said. "Kill him if you can, but don't brag too soon."

"I'll do it," returned the giant, sharply. "I'll do it."

"Not here."

"And why not?"

"Because I order you not to attempt it."

"You? Bah!"

"Yes, I, and beware how you would cross me," said Hunston.

"Cease your idle threats with me," said Toro; "you know that I value them not."

"You want to quarrel with me, then?"

"Quarrel? Not I, indeed, only have a care now far you go with me, for though I am a patient man—"

"You?" laughed Hunston, derisively, "you a patient man? Rubbish!"

Toro, goaded to fury by the other's sneers and taunts, sprang upon him, and seized him in his powerful grip by the throat. Hunston never uttered a word of remonstrance. He simply drew from the inner pocket of his waistcoat a long, slender stiletto, and glided it with a sharp motion through the fleshy part of his assailant's arm. Toro yelled. It seared him like a red-hot iron. He stepped back, and clapped this hand to the wounded part.

"A blight upon you!" he cried; "you have stabbed me."

"A mere prick," said Hunston, coolly; "let it warn you."

Toro looked dangerous.

"Be advised," said Hunston, menacingly.

Toro stepped after him, holding his bleeding arm. Hunston retreated a step, and stood on guard.

"The next time I strike, it shall be at your heart," he said, as quietly as before.

The brigand Toro stopped short. There was a quiet intensity in the other's manner, which told the giant that he would keep his word. Toro was no coward, but his courage was of that kind which cannot bear to face danger with the same deliberation as the scoundrel Hunston would.

So he grumbled and growled, and growled again, and finally swallowed his wrath. Hunston knew better than anyone with whom he had to deal. He watched Toro for a moment, and then put by his stiletto.

"Let me bandage your arm," he said.

Toro made no answer, but sullenly bared the wounded part. Then Hunston bathed it with a handkerchief, and bound it tightly up.

"It is idle for us to quarrel, you see," said Hunston.

"It is no fault of mine."

"Nor of mine."

"Why——" began Toro, in a loud voice.

"There, there," interrupted Hunston, impatiently, "we are recommencing, it appears to me."

The giant gave a sullen growl. But you could see, however, by the workings of his face what a struggle it cost him to subdue his fury.

"Toro, my friend," said Hunston, when the arm was finished, "I must say a word or two to you seriously."

"Say on."

"If we are to continue together, you will have

to control that temper of yours, for you will ruin both of us otherwise."

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"Would you have me submit tamely to his insults and blows?"

"For awhile."

"I cannot."

"You must. You will if you are wise."

"Never."

"Not if I show you how to repay him, to have your vengeance upon him and his, all at one blow, and to make a rich booty by it at the same time?"

"How?" demanded the ex-brigand, eagerly.

His eyes sparkled like diamonds at the thought.

"I will tell you. To-night, when all the house is wrapt in sleep, we will—hush!"

"What is it?"

Hunston pointed to the room door significantly.

"There's no one there," said Toro, eagerly; "go on."

Hunston resumed in a low voice. What he had to impart was evidently of a nature to interest and excite his hearer rarely. Toro's fierce eyes gleamed, and his face flushed again.

"It shall be done," he cried, with an oath; "it shall be done."

"You are right."

"And this night, too."

"This very night. Hush!"

The door moved. Hunston stepped very nimbly and noiselessly to it, then tore it suddenly open, discovering a man stooping to pick something off the floor.

"Ah!" ejaculated Toro, "eavesdropping."

He grasping the man by the shoulder, and lifting him up, showed the face of Silly Webb.

"Lor' me, mister!" said the weak-witted man.

"How are you?"

Toro clenched his huge fist menacingly.

"What are you doing there?" demanded Hunston.

"I was picking up this."

"What?" said the fierce giant, giving him a rough shake; "answer quicker."

"Only this."

And Silly Webb popped up a six-shooter under the giant's nose. Toro stepped back.

"Did you find that?" asked Hunston.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"On the mat."

"Quite right," replied Hunston. "I was wondering where I could have dropped it."

He stepped up, with his hands outstretched to take it; but just as he was close upon it, Silly Webb, the poor, weak-witted fool, presented it, in the stupidest way imaginable, full at Hunston's face.

"Mind what you are at; it may go off."

"Yes," said Webb, grinning in the same meaningless way. "Mind that it don't go off; it might injure you, and I should be so sorry."

"Give it me."

"Oh, no; it feels so nice in my hand."

"But—but," said Hunston, "it is mine."

"Perhaps; now it's mine," said Webb.

Hunston bit his lip till the blood came. Still the game was to coax the revolver out of the soft-headed fellow's hands.

"Come, come," he said, putting on his most persuasive manner. "You wouldn't keep what don't belong to you?"

"Oh, yes, I would. Besides, I should like to feel it go off."

And the revolver held in Webb's hand seemed to take a direct line first at Hunston's head and then at Toro's. Silly Webb grinned from ear to ear.

"Findings, keepings," Silly Webb chanted, with an impish stare; "losings, seekings."

Toro's temper rose, and advancing before Hunston, he said, in a voice of thunder:

"Give me that weapon, or this knife shall see the color of your blood."

At the same moment, he drew a long knife from his coat pocket.

"Please don't," said Webb; "you frighten me, and when I am so put out, I don't know what I do."

"Will you give me that revolver before I strike you?" cried Toro, raising his knife.

"Mind, please, mind your head," cried Webb, looking up at the giant; "I think the revolver is going off. There!"

Bang! A loud report, and Toro's hat went flying off his head. The next moment Webb went skipping along the corridor, like a schoolboy of six or seven.

"After him," whispered Toro. "I mistrust him."

Without a word, Hunston shot along the thickly-carpeted corridor, clutching his long thin stiletto. He gained every step upon the poor idiot. Did not Silly Webb hear him? Surely not.

He would certainly have turned round else, in spite of his silliness. A minute—nay, a moment more, and Hunston, with that slender, snake-like blade uplifted, was upon him, when, in the very nick of time, Silly Webb turned round sharply and faced him.

"Hullo! sir, where are you running to?"

Hunston was transfixed with surprise, and Silly Webb suddenly pushed out his revolver in Hunston's face.

"Mind it don't go off again," he said.

"Put it down," said Hunston.

"What do you want?" asked Silly Webb.

"This pistol?"

"Yes."

"Then you can't have it—he, he, he!"

Hunston was furious, yet dared not show it.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Silly Webb, suddenly;

"what a pretty knife."

Hunston tried to conceal it.

"Don't hide it; give it to me."

"I can't—I—I—"

"Oh, do," said Webb.

Then suddenly bringing down his outstretched revolver upon Hunston's knuckles with a hard rap, the stiletto fell to the floor. At the same moment, he thrust out his revolver as if he meant to fire, and as Hunston stepped back in alarm, he whipped up the stiletto from the floor, and darted off.

"Devil!" cried Hunston. "Give me back my stiletto. Toro, Toro, quick, this way after him. He must not escape us."

The strange man, who had got the best of Hunston, darted along, still grinning, until he ran into the arms of his keeper, Mr. Percival.

"Hullo! Webb, my lad! what's up?"

It was singular then to see how serious and full of earnestness Silly Webb became.

He grasped Percival's hand, and drew him hurriedly into a small room close by, saying:

"Quick! enter here! There is more work, and dangerous work, cut out for us than I expected. Quick, and close the door; we must not be suspected."

* * * * *

A little later in the day Harkaway came after Dick Harvey with an open letter in his hand.

"What now, Jack?" asked Harvey, anxiously.

"Well, old boy, read this."

And he handed him the letter. Harvey read, and his face grew long and thoughtful.

"Confound it all," he said, "and hang all mysterious correspondents."

"Not all."

"Yes, all."

"But this one appears to be friendly."

Harvey thought awhile, and then he answered, musingly:

"Well, Jack, he may be friendly, or he may not."

And Harvey read once more the letter.

It ran thus:

"Accept my former warning. My worst fears for you are realized. Danger surrounds you. Be on your guard against any artifice. Above all, watch your son day and night—and night more than all."

CHAPTER XI.

A VERY BLACK BUSINESS.

NIGHT! All Boston was buried in sleep. No, not all.

There were two people moving stealthily about at the hotel in which resided the Harkaway family. The movements of the two persons in question were of a singular and mysterious nature.

The day had been sultry. A thick mist hung over the city the whole day long, and the weather

wise had been predicting storms, hurricanes, and other objectionable freaks of the elements. But the storm had not yet burst forth.

The mist thickened after dark, and now it enveloped the whole city in a fog. A nasty night to be out. A night for evil deeds. What could bring people out from the hotel on such a night as this? Suddenly two men crept forth from the hotel, cloaked, with mufflers on, too, up to their ears. Their faces were so carefully hidden, that the sleepy negro in the hall, who had to let them out, did not recognize them as inmates of the hotel. And yet he knew everyone there, for he was a very intelligent negro, and his name, according to his own account, was Caesar Augustus Hannibal Constantine Jex.

"It seems very strange why they go out so dark a night; dis child tink it not correct."

But he could not give himself a satisfactory reply. So he wisely gave it up for a bad job, and dropping into his chair, fell asleep.

The two mysterious wanderers seemed very anxious not to be seen, for their chiet care was to walk on noiselessly in opposite directions, and watch at the corners of the street. Then, having satisfied themselves on that point, they returned to their starting point. They looked like specters gliding along in the fog. Not the faintest echo did their footfalls wake. How could this be? Over their boots they wore large felt slippers, which deadened all sound most effectually.

This was a device well known to all burglars and such midnight marauders.

It looked ugly.

"Where's the lantern?" asked the taller of the two, who towered over his companion.

"Here; but speak lower."

So saying, he threw back his cloak and brought out a bull's-eye lantern, which he turned slowly and flashed upon the basement windows of the hotel.

"Be careful," exclaimed the other. "The night porter is perhaps watching."

"Not he; did you not see that he could hardly stand for drowsiness?"

"No matter; we can't be too careful."

"Get your bottles."

The other obeyed.

The bottles were made of tin and covered in wickerwork, and from them dangled parchment address labels, upon which was printed a single word in large capitals:

PETROLEUM.

The man with the lantern flashed its rays again upon the iron grating covering in the cellars and basement rooms. The room immediately beneath where they stood was evidently a carpenter's workshop.

"That's the place to begin on," said the man with the lantern.

"Good."

"Stop; don't break the window. The noise might arouse somebody."

Then stooping, he fastened an india-rubber ring upon the window by means of a species of sucker such as we see used in shop windows as pegs for the display of goods. He next took a diamond ring off his little finger with his teeth (he was as handy with his teeth as most of us are with our fingers), and taking it in his hand, he proceeded to scratch four lines round the rubber ring, which he had fixed on the glass. This done, he pocketed the ring and tapped gently at the india-rubber ring, and the pane came out with little or no noise.

"Now for it."

He grew just a little excited and threw back his cloak. And then you saw why he was so handy with his teeth. He was a one-armed man.

As soon as the pane of glass was removed, the taller man advanced with his wicker-covered cans or bottles, and emptied the contents of half of one into the workshop.

"The tonga wood, shavings, and straw will help us," said the big cloaked figure.

"Now," said the one-armed man, "saturate the cotton wool you have with you thoroughly with petroleum."

Then they threw it down through the window.

"It is done," cried the taller of the two men.

"Now for the window above."

He then took from his companion beneath some balls of cotton wool saturated with petroleum. These he tossed lightly into the room. About ten balls he threw in thus.

"Are they out?" whispered the one-armed man.

"No."

"That's good."

"Three have gone out, some are smouldering, and one is already licking the edge of the table-cover."

"Good, good!"

The tall man dropped from his perch.

"We must be quick now," he cried.

The one-armed man took a box of matches from his pocket, opened them half way, and ignited the whole box. This he tossed through the basement window into the shavings bestrewing the carpenter's shop beneath. They watched eagerly. The shavings caught fire. This appeared to be all they required, for as soon as they saw the flames, off they went. The strange proceedings was repeated in different quarters of the hotel. Presently the big man gave a cry of alarm.

"What is it?" demanded the companion.

"See there!"

"Where?"

"The room where the shavings are."

He looked round. The flames had already shot through the basement window, and were licking the grating and wall in front.

"We must be quick," said the one-armed man, in an excited whisper.

"Yes," replied the giant; "this daring work is to my liking."

"Hark! What's that?" said the one-armed man.

"What?"

"Don't you hear?"

"Not I."

"A footstep."

He listened eagerly, and a heavy, measured tread was heard approaching.

"I am well prepared for anyone," said the big man. "I care not."

The one-armed man again spoke in a low tone.

"Silence! it is the police! What is to be done?"

"Leave him to me," said the giant. There was a fatal significance in the burly fellow's manner as he said this. They stepped softly over the road, and slunk into the recesses of a deep and dark doorway. The measured tread came on—nearer—nearer.

"He's turned the corner," said the one-armed man, "and coming this way."

"No, he's gone."

"I hear him, I tell you. Confound it! we were too quick in firing that carpenter's shop; we ought to have left it for the last. It will spoil us yet, if we are not careful."

"Bah!"

"Hush!"

The policeman turned the corner, and came on in the direction of the hotel. He had not made half a dozen strides when the glare of the fire caught his eye. With a cry of alarm, he came on at a double. And then, as soon as he had ascertained that it proceeded from the hotel, he ran off to the front of the house with a view of warning the inmates. The unfortunate man was never able to carry out his good intention, for a shadowy figure crept up to him, met him crosswise, and cut him off short.

"Stop!"

"There's a fire; the hotel's burning," said the policeman.

"Yes, and you have done it," said a gruff voice in his ear.

"? Nonsense! Stand aside; I'm going to give the alarm."

"Take that first."

A terrific blow was dealt at his head, but as the unhappy policeman jerked aside, it glanced off on to his shoulder.

"Murder!" he cried.

And he turned like a brave man to grapple with his assailant. But courage could not avail him against the brute strength of the giant in whose clutches he was held.

The blow was speedily followed by another,

which nearly smashed his head in. He struggled manfully, and again attempted to beat off his foe, but at that moment a treacherous hand thrust a knife in his back up to the very hilt.

Another crushing blow from the giant's sledge-hammer fist stove in the unhappy man's head. Then, with a dull, hollow groan, he dropped upon the ground, a murdered man.

CHAPTER XII.

NERO AND JEX TO THE RESCUE.

"Come, Toro," said the one-armed man; "be quick now. Look at the blood about your hands and coat."

"I care not for that."

The butchery just perpetrated affected him no more than would the drowning of a kitten.

"We can't leave the body there."

"What, then?"

"Take it up, and throw it somewhere into the flames."

"Good; you are always full of thought and prudence," said the giant.

They dragged it round to the window of the library and reading-room. The giant climbed up, and once in the room, he leant over, and putting forth his great strength, dragged the body of his victim up after him.

"Now, Hunston."

The one-armed man stretched out his hand, and thus clambered and scrambled into the reading-room. It was already ablaze in three different places. The window curtains had caught, the table was alight, and the flames were creeping up the wainscot and paneling by the fireplace. The one-armed man looked about him eagerly.

"Where is the dead man?"

"There."

Toro pointed to the body of the policeman, which he had thrown under the table for the flames to devour it speedily, and thus destroy the traces of their crime.

They then made for the door.

It was fast.

"Confusion!" exclaimed Hunston. "It is locked."

"Ha! where is the key?"

"On the other side."

"We must force it."

"Impossible."

"Why?"

"To break it open we shall have to carry away the woodwork."

"Why so?"

"Because it opens inwards," was the reply, "and it would never move unless we would carry away the framework of the doorway."

"We can't stay here to be caught like rats in a trap."

Hunston looked gloomily about him for awhile. He was calculating the chances.

"There is nothing for it," he said. "We must retreat."

"What?"

"By the window."

"Never?" thundered Toro. "See here, I'll soon make short work of this."

"Stop, fool! you'll alarm the whole house," said Hunston.

"I'll stop for no man and lose the best prize of the lot," said Toro, indignantly.

"The diamonds?"

"Yes."

"And supposing the diamonds aren't there after all—supposing it is one of those idle exaggerations of the waiters?"

"But I saw them, I tell you, saw them with my own eyes—there, glittering in a desk upon the table. Now, stand aside and let me try my strength on the door, or we shall be baked alive in this flaming den."

Hunston started.

"Are you sure they are diamonds?"

"I swear it," thundered Toro. "Some of them as big as peas, and glittering so that they dazzled your eyes. It is a prize worth a kingdom—an Eldorado!"

"Well," said Hunston, "the boy, young Jack Harkaway, is the prize I care for—even before the diamonds you speak of."

"Bah!" said Toro, contemptuously. "Do you

think I'll shirk a little danger for such a prize? Go or come with me, as you please. I'm there. Now clear the way."

So saying, he literally hurled his huge body against the door, and it went in with a crash.

"Come on, or, if you prefer it, seek for the boy first."

Hunston did not wait now for scruples or prudence, but dashed on after Toro the giant.

All was silent. The house slept on. The crackling of the flames and the crash of the reading-room door had not yet been heard by the sleeping inmates of the hotel. They little dreamt of the deadly danger they ran.

"This way," said Toro, when they gained the second floor.

"What number does the old man sleep in?"

"Thirty-three."

"Come on, then; but now for silence."

The door numbered thirty-three stood ajar.

They crept in on tip-toe. At the end of the room was a four-post bedstead, round which the drapery was closely drawn. They crept on towards it silently.

It was truly an exciting moment for them. The time was short, they knew that well enough, for soon the whole house would be aroused. Their deadly work must be accomplished with expedition.

"Where are the shiners?"

It was Hunston who spoke, and his voice hissed like a serpent when about to dart.

"Try under his pillow."

"Confound it!"

"Hush!"

Toro trod the floor like a fay; a moment more, and he was beside the sleeping man.

Tenderly he slid one hand beneath the pillow and groped about, while with the other he held aloft a bright and long knife over the sleeper. Hunston looked anxiously on.

Suddenly a smile of satisfaction illumined the giant's swarthy face.

"I've got it," he whispered.

He drew forth a weighty bag, and jerked it gently to assure himself and his comrade that the coveted booty was there.

"Open it," said Hunston.

"Why?"

"To make sure."

Toro eagerly tore open the bag, and dropped some of the brilliants into his palm.

They glistened in a way that made their eyes sparkle with maddening delight. For a moment they actually forgot the terrible doom of the burning house beneath them.

"I will take care of the bag," said Hunston, making a snatch at it.

Toro turned sharply on him and seized him by the throat.

"No tricks of that kind with me, Hunston," he said, in a deep-toned whisper.

Hunston threw him off.

"You will insist upon taking those liberties with my throat," he said, significantly, "in spite of the warning I gave you to-day, when I had to lance your arm to let out some of your fever. What matters who keeps the shiners—you or I?"

"Just what I think," returned the giant, grimly, "so leave them in my keeping."

During this brief squabble, the owner of the brilliants opened his eyes. At first he could not understand the meaning of the scene. His impulse was naturally to cry out.

Luckily for him, he thought better of it, or he might never have called out again. No; the huge proportions of Toro filled him with awe. The naked dagger that Hunston carried terrified him. So he was silent.

He fixed them both beneath his long, shaggy eyebrows, so as to remember them again under more favorable chances, and feigned to sleep. They stepped out as gently and as quietly as they came.

"Those are nice visitors," said the old gentleman, drily. "Prudence is never thrown away. It was a happy inspiration which led me to hide the real ones and place the dummies in the bag under my pillow while the waiter was in my room. I saw the fellow stare. He's in the pay of these two pretty fellows. But they are deceived; the

dummies they have robbed me of are not worth three dollars."

So, chuckling to himself, he turned over on his side.

"Dear me!" he said to himself; "what a smell of smoke!"

He sat up again, and looked about him to see if anything was wrong.

No, nothing. Yet he sniffed again and again uneasily.

"It must come from outside"

So he rang the bell loudly.

"I pity one of the waiters if those two should meet him on the stairs, and think it prudent to put him out of the way. Well, well, it's only a nigger more or less."

* * * * *

"Now for the boy—young Jack."

This was said by the villain Hunston.

"Which is his room?"

"Next to his father's."

"Be careful, then, Toro, for I would not care to run foul of Harkaway."

Toro sneered.

"Are you afraid of Harkaway?" he said.

"Afraid? No," returned Hunston, "I hate him bitterly. But the man who by his pluck and perseverance destroyed Barboni and his band is not to be despised."

"I know it well," said Toro; "but I fear him not."

"Nor I," returned Hunston, savagely; "only it is not worth while risking all in the moment of success for the sake of showing off our foolhardiness."

Young Jack had locked his door, for he did not want his father to surprise him. The fact was that, in defiance of his father's orders, he had brought Nero, his big monkey, up to his room.

"There!" said young Jack; "shan't I get a wiggling from dad! Here, Nero!"

Young Jack jumped out of bed, and slipped on his trousers and shoes quickly.

Then he popped Nero into the bed and covered him over with the bedclothes.

"Dad'll never go near the bed," said Jack, to himself. "I suppose he has come to wake me, and finding me up, he will go back."

He turned the key gently, and stepped aside, intending to pop out and startle his father. But what was his surprise and dismay to see two strange men enter? They brushed by him, and made straight for the bed, and young Jack slipped out into the passage. Toro and Hunston went straight up to the bed, pulled the clothes back, and—

"The devil!" cried Toro.

Nero did certainly not look unlike his satanic majesty, as he squatted up, grinning at them. Some curious instinct must have told Nero that they were enemies. That ordinarily gentle chimpanzee sprang up and bounded on to Toro's shoulders, giving him a playful tug at the hair, and drew out a pawful of his dyed locks.

"Fiends and furies!" yelled the giant.

Nero leaped off him on to Hunston, and clawed him down the face.

The two of them fought desperately. But Nero was more than a match for them. It would have gone hard with them if they had touched him, but they could not get near him. The monkey was here, there and everywhere in a twinkling. Meanwhile young Jack, in his alarm, ran to his parents' room adjoining. The door was locked. He knocked hurriedly and called out, but before the door could be opened, the two ruffians were out of the room and after him.

Young Jack only paused for a moment by the door. His first impression was that he was more secure near his father than in flight. But here he made a mistake. In a case of such danger, prompt action alone can avail one. That momentary hesitation nearly did for him. Nimble as young Jack was, the giant Toro's strides were about four of young Jack's, and being in a slight degree taken by surprise, Toro seized him just as he reached the top stair.

"Help!" cried young Jack.

The struggle was very brief—so brief as barely to merit the name of a struggle, and the boy was lifted up under Toro's brawny arm like a baby.

"Fly!" cried Hunston, in an excited whisper.

"I can hear doors opening. No time is to be lost."

The alarm was getting general. Harkaway opened his door, and appeared on the threshold in his dressing gown just as Hunston had got out of sight, and Master Nero was following.

"Confound that monkey!" ejaculated Harkaway. "Hang me if he isn't up to some mischief. Jack has let him loose, and he has aroused the whole house."

He pushed open the bedroom door and entered. Empty! What could it mean? Was young Jack up to some practical joking again? Suddenly the recollection of the two anonymous letters flashed across his mind, and his cheek turned pale. What if any harm had happened to his boy?

The thought was agonizing. In a moment a dismal cry came from below. Harkaway dashed down the stairs, but at the next landing he was thunderstruck to behold the place filled with thick smoke.

Flames burst through an open door at the further end of the passage. Harkaway stopped short, utterly dazed.

"I must have slept heavily," he thought. "Jack gave the alarm, but couldn't wake us. Yet surely the boy would never have left us to our fate."

The fire made headway at an awful rate. The flames crept along the passage, and before long it was very evident that the whole of the great building would be engulfed.

"Emily!" cried Harkaway. "Emily will be lost."

He darted back and dashed up the stairs as the alarm bell rang out, and set the house upon the move, from the cellars to the garret.

Meanwhile how fared young Jack? He fought desperately against Toro; but the giant carried him off as easily as he would a kitten. Bells were ringing up stairs and down stairs, and in a moment or two escape would be impossible. They made for the front door. It was locked, bolted and barred securely.

"Open it!" exclaimed Toro. "Quick! quick!"

Hunston wanted no urging. Bars and bolts were withdrawn, but there remained an alarming obstacle. The door was locked, and the key was not there. What was to be done?

"Trapped!" cried Toro.

"No!" cried Hunston, "I have it."

"What?"

"The hall window."

"Quick, then, lead the way."

In less than half the time it has taken to describe it here, they darted out of the passage. They were at the window—and Hunston had contrived to throw it open. A moment more, and they would be safe.

"Go first, Hunston," said the giant, "and I will hand you down the brat."

The "brat," as Toro contemptuously styled young Jack, kicked away mercilessly now, and by his struggles very materially impeded their progress.

"Gag him—tie down his arms, strike him!" said Hunston, excitedly.

"I'll kill him at once," said the giant, "if he is not quiet."

They mauled him cruelly, though, happily for poor young Jack, in the excitement prevailing he did not feel the effects of their brutality. He was rapidly growing exhausted, when one of the inmates of the hotel put in a sudden appearance and came to the rescue.

"Leave go your hold of the boy," said a firm voice.

"Stand aside!" cried Hunston, excitedly.

"Not at your bidding. Does the boy want you to drag him about like that?"

"No, no!" cried young Jack, renewing his struggles; "help, help! please help me."

"I will, my brave lad; now drop him," said the new-comer, resolutely.

He then manfully dashed at them, and it looked as though the giant and his villainous leader were about to be defeated.

It was neck or nothing now for them, and Hunston, never over scrupulous, sheathed a bowie knife in the brave fellow's side, and he dropped to the floor with a hollow groan.

"Now drop the boy through."

Hunston clambered through the window, and

Toro handed down young Jack. Now, just as Toro was preparing to follow, the wounded man rose to his knees, and seeing the giant half through the window, he seized him by the leg, and exerting all his strength, he canted him over into the street.

Toro fell on his head, and lay there as he fell, apparently lifeless. He was no light weight to fall from such a height. Then, just as young Jack reached the ground, a dark figure crept up to Hunston, closed upon him, and dealt him a succession of vicious blows upon the head with a bludgeon. Hunston dropped, felled like an ox, or his head would have been battered in.

And there they lay, the two villainous authors of all this havoc, half dead, insensible to all that was passing around, and in terrible proximity to the mine which their own hands had sprung.

"Yah, yah! come along wid dis infant," said the dusky rescuer to young Jack.

It was the negro whom Harkaway had preserved from the brutality of Toro in the smoking-saloon.

"What is the matter? Who are those men? The place is all afire? Where are my father and mother?" asked the bewildered Jack.

"We'll see after dem now, Massa Jack," said the darkey; "I so glad I save you. Yah! yah!"

The brave fellow, who rendered young Jack such service and settled Toro's present devilment so summarily, clutched the window ledge for support with one hand, while with the other he fumbled at his waistcoat pocket for something.

Then he blew shrilly upon a silver call or whistle. That strange signal brought Silly Webb flying along in the direction, for the wounded man was none other than Percival, the brave and mysterious keeper of the still more mysterious Webb. Webb gave a cry of alarm as he saw his friend's condition.

"What is it?" he ejaculated, wildly. "Who has done this?"

"The villain Hunston and the brigand fellow," returned Percival, faintly.

"How? When?"

Percival gasped out some hurried words of explanation.

"It was two to one against me, but I heard the brigand fall—a heavy load; he's not got far, I should say."

Webb looked out of the window, and seeing the two scoundrels lying side by side, he gave a cry of exultation.

"Come, come, old friend!" he said, turning to Mr. Percival; "lean upon me, and let us be gone. I cannot leave you."

The wounded man made an effort to move, but sank back with a groan, exhausted.

"Let me rest here," he said, faintly; "I cannot stir."

"You must," persisted Webb; "the place is afire—the danger increases every minute! Try, try! Come, old friend, so, so!"

He placed his arm round poor Percival's waist, and exerting all his strength, raised him up.

"Now throw your arm about my neck," he added, coaxingly.

Percival struggled bravely with the deathly weakness which was stealing over him. But in vain; and after moving on four or five paces, he sank down upon the ground. He was ghastly pale. Filled with a nameless horror, Webb dragged open the wounded man's vest, and placed his ear upon his chest. As he did so, poor Percival opened his eyes, but they slowly closed again, and with a faint sigh he fainted.

"Percival, Percival!" almost shrieked Webb, "look up, old boy. Dear old friend, think of what we have yet to work out; think of our murdered pal, that Emmerson struck down and killed, and whose death we have yet to avenge."

But Percival was for a time past hearing his friend's voice; he lay in Webb's arms like a dead man. The fire alarm bell rang out louder and louder.

"Fire! fire! fire!"

The fearful word of warning echoed through the house, too late, alack, in many instances to save the hapless inmates. A glance about him showed Webb the extreme danger of his position, so he carried his comrade and friend out through the hall door, which by this time was battered in. He carefully left his poor friend in charge of some

kind people whose attendance he could rely on, and then returned to secure the brigand and Hunston. But now a fresh surprise awaited him. When he reached the spot where he had seen Hunston and Toro senseless upon the ground, they had both disappeared. Not a trace of them could be discovered.

"Gone!" he cried, in a perfect fury of disappointment. "No matter; hide where they will, let them burrow down into the very bowels of the earth, I'll dig them out."

And Silly Webb, otherwise Daniel Pike, was a man of his word.

* * * * *

The whole of the building now appeared to be one mass of flames. Retreat by the staircase was hopelessly cut off. In the crowd were young Jack, Mr. Mole, Silly Webb, alias Daniel Pike, and the negro waiter who had so opportunely come to young Jack's rescue. The whole of them looked helplessly, hopelessly on, while the flames swallowed up the hotel and all their dearest friends. Poor Mr. Mole was filled with grief and terror.

"My poor, brave Harkaway! A hundred dollars to anyone who will rescue him! Can no one do anything?"

Impossible. There was nothing to be done. One man in the crowd had brought his patent life-preserving apparatus, a rope ladder, with big hooks or grappling irons fitted on the top. Just as the inventor and his invention arrived upon the scene, a window was opened, and at it appeared Harkaway and Emily. Jack was cool and collected enough, but his poor wife could plainly be seen wringing her hands piteously, and her voice could be heard above the roar of the flames, calling upon the people beneath for assistance.

"Have you no ladders?" called out Harkaway.

"No, no."

"Wait, wait," shouted poor old Mole. "For heaven's sake, wait; we will get some!"

And then he turned to the crowd and offered the most extravagant rewards for ladders. At this moment a new character appeared at the window. This was young Jack's monkey, Nero. Poor Nero began to find it too warm to be pleasant, and so he prepared for a rapid descent by the water pipe.

It was ludicrous, in the midst of that terrible scene, to see the monkey scramble down and save his skin whole, while the superior animal man was powerless to help himself. There was a special providence in this, for the incident furnished young Jack with the happiest thought that had ever occurred to him. Harkaway was evidently preparing for something desperate, for he had begun to throw the bedding and mattresses out of the window.

"Stop, stop, father!" shouted young Jack; "we shall save you."

He called out for a rope. The inventor came forward with his patent ladder.

"If you can get a rope up there," he said, "you can surely get my rope ladder up there."

"Is it light?"

"Very."

"Good," said young Jack, excitedly. "Come, here, Nero! good Nero! quick, quick!"

The monkey came up grinning to his young master. Jack took the ladder and fastened its topmost rung about the monkey's neck.

"Now, Nero," he said, patting the chimpanzee and pointing up to where Harkaway and Emily stood, "I want you to take this to my father, up there. Good Nero! dear Nero!"

And so, partly coaxing, partly commanding, he led Nero to the water-pipe, by which he had first made his descent. He gave him a hand up, and Nero, who was brimful of intelligence and obedience, scrambled up. Words cannot describe the excitement of the lookers-on during Nero's desperate climb. They held the ladder below, so as to lighten its weight as well as they could, and up, up he went. A few feet more, and the brave monkey would be there.

And now he was but nine or ten feet from the window, he was seen to be in trouble. The weight of the rope ladder was beginning to tell upon him. Poor Nero struggled on boldly, but it was too much for him.

He paused! Wavered! Slid back a foot or two! An agonized cry burst from below. Not a

word from above. Harkaway was pale, but patient and resigned. The last hope was vanishing fast when young Jack burst through the crowd and dashed after Nero.

"Hold him back!" shouted one.

"He will be killed!" cried another.

"It is certain death."

But the bold boy fought them back.

"Keep off from me!" he shouted; "I will save my dear father and mother, or die with them!"

Then, slipping the lower part of the rope ladder over his head, he climbed up the pipe after the gallant Nero. Somebody cheered him for his brave action, but the cry was soon suppressed. They feared to startle the two climbers, and make them miss their perilous hold. The effect of young Jack's action was soon apparent. It lightened the weight of the ladder to such an extent that Nero scrambled on with a shrill squeak of pleasure—or was it of pain?—for the water-pipe was getting unpleasantly hot. And now Harkaway could almost reach him.

"Brave Nero," said he, to encourage the monkey. "Bold Nero! good fellow, come. Come a little further! Hurrah!" came in clear tones from Harkaway.

"Hurrah! hurrah!"

Deafening cheers burst from every lip below, for Harkaway held the rope-ladder in his grasp. Nero was lifted in.

The ladder was fastened by the iron hooks to the window-sill, and Nero was the first to scramble down it.

He no sooner reached the ground than, much to the surprise of the people, he commenced grinning, squeaking, and turning no end of flip-flaps and hand-springs.

"You next, Emily," said Harkaway. Come, my dear!"

"I dare not go alone."

"You must; it will not support us both together. Come, dear!"

She tried to screw her courage up, but again she faltered.

It was a perilous height.

"My darling!" urged Harkaway, "be brave; think of our boy. Take heart for my sake. Remember how brave you were in our younger days."

Thus admonished, Emily stepped boldly down, and soon was out of danger. Then Harkaway slid down the ladder, and caught Emily and young Jack in his arms.

CHAPTER XIII.

EVERYBODY cheered and cheered again for sheer joy when they saw Mrs. Harkaway hugging and kissing her son, young Jack. And you should have heard them laugh when Nero, seeing that this was the order of the day, leaped on and cuddled Mr. Mole.

"Stop a bit," exclaimed Harkaway, presently. "While we are rejoicing here, we are forgetting Harvey and Hilda and the child, and Monday and Ada—are they safe?"

Happily, this question was soon settled. The Harvey family had had a narrow escape by the roof, over dangerous housetops, and were in perfect safety in an adjoining house.

But the fright had had such a sad effect both upon Hilda and her daughter, little Emily, christened after Jack's wife, that Dick had not been able to leave them at first. Burning, however, with anxiety to know how his friends had fared, he left Hilda and little Emily in the care of Ada. Shortly after this, the whole party adjourned to the house which served the Harveys for an asylum. And they compared notes for an explanation of the affair.

"Yet," said Harkaway to young Jack, "how came you to leave my bedroom door until I came?"

"I can answer that," said a deep voice.

They all turned round, and there stood the singular man whom they knew hitherto as Silly Webb.

"What do you know of it, Mr. Webb?" asked Harkaway.

"Everything. I will tell you," said Webb, "but what I have to say had better, perhaps, be confided to yourself and Mr. Harvey in private."

Harvey and Harkaway exchanged significant

glances. These were observed, and their import noted, by the so-called Silly Webb.

"I know," he said, with a sad smile, "you think me silly; but if you will come here, I can soon convince you that I am not quite as mad as you may suppose."

They were struck by his manner, and withdrew to a further corner of the room together.

"Well, for a startler to you," he said; "the cause of the fire is partly through an attempt to carry off your son, Mr. Harkaway."

"Ha!"

"Impossible!" said Harvey; "what grounds have you?"

"Grounds!" interrupted Webb, "no grounds, but positive proof. My poor pal, Nabley, (whom you knew as Percival), was knifed—almost killed, in attempting to rescue him from two of your deadly foes."

"What foes have I now following me?" said Jack.

"One," said Webb, "who has followed you with hate from your boyhood."

"Whom can you mean? Speak out, man."

"I will; you must be more on your guard, for it is your enemy, Hunston."

Jack and Harvey started with surprise.

"Will that man never leave me in peace?" cried Jack. "It seems nothing but the grave for one of us, will stop his villainy."

"If I meet him," said Harvey, "I will show him no mercy."

"Nor I," replied Jack; "but now let us have the name of our other foe."

"Toro, the brigand," said Webb, slowly.

"Impossible!"

"It is true."

"But how is it that my boy is here safe?" said Harkaway.

"Because poor Nabley stopped and attacked the two of them. When I came up, he was beyond giving me a full explanation, and he is now in great danger of his life."

"Jack."

Young Jack came over to his father.

"How did you escape from the clutches of those men?"

"I hardly know, dad," answered young Jack. "I only remember that Mr. Percival tried to help me, and that he got struck down by the cowardly man with one arm."

"Hunston!" said Harkaway.

"Hunston?" said young Jack, pricking up his ears. "What, Hunston, your old enemy, dad?"

"No matter," returned his father, evasively.

"Well, the one-armed man was just about to lay hold of me, when all of a sudden the giant was thrown out of the window on his head, and lay there. Then, while we were gasping at this, Mr. Jex jumped upon the one-armed man and hammered him with a stick about the head until he dropped."

"Mr. Jex."

"Yes, sar, I am here, sar."

"How did you do it?"

"Do what, sar?" asked the darkey.

"Why, rescue my son."

"Why, sar," responded the nigger, grinning from ear to ear, "I only rubbed the gemman's hair with a little stick backwards and forwards. I gib um toko; him not like it, sar, and then I gib um 'what for, Lady Jane?'"

"Both good," laughed Harvey.

"Yes, sar, but him object to hab any more of Lady Jane; him dropped down. And now me be bery glad to find Massa Jack Harkaway safe. Dis child fight any man any day, sar, to help him."

"Yes," said the mysterious Webb, advancing and taking young Jack's hand, "and I will be near you, my boy, in the hour of danger. We will yet be a match for the villain Hunston and the brigand Toro."

"Thanks, friends," said Jack Harkaway.

Then, turning to young Jack, he said:

"You will have to show your pluck, lad, for you seem to be getting into troubled waters."

"I don't fear, dad," said young Jack. "You have told me a boy of the Saxon race should not know the meaning of the word fear."

Harkaway felt proud of his son, but little knew what fearful dangers young Jack would very shortly have to encounter.

CHAPTER XIV.

"CÆSAR JEX," said Harkaway.

"Beg your pardon, Mister Harkaway, sar, but you am not quite right," said Jex.

"What's the matter, old man?"

"Why, sar, my name is Cæsar Augustus Hannibal Constantine Jex, sar, if you please," answered the nigger.

"Whoo—oo!" said Harkaway. "Well, then, Cæsar—"

"And the rest of it, Jack," said Dick.

"You are a noble fellow," said Harkaway, "and I shall reward you."

"Dis nigger don't want nuffin," said Jex.

"Something you must have before you go."

"Go," echoed young Jack, dolefully.

"Yes."

"He's not going."

"Not going?" exclaimed his father. "What is Jex going to do, then?"

"To stay with me—are you not, Jex?"

Cæsar Augustus grinned in a way that showed clearly enough he was of young Jack's way of thinking.

"Yah! yah!" he laughed. "You am de rum-mest chile, Massa Jack, I ebber hear or see. What can them gemmen do wid a poor-ole nigger like me?"

Cæsar Augustus was neither old nor useless, but he was a modest nigger, and he put his claims for favor in with diffidence.

"I can tell you," said Dick Harvey; "I shall press Cæsar Hannibal into my service."

"What do you say?" asked young Jack.

The darkey was delighted. He grinned from ear to ear.

"Dat'll just soot Cæsar Hannibal Constantine—"

"Stop, stop," cried Harvey. "I could never have anything to do with a name like that. You shall be taken, friend Jex, but on condition that you are re-christened forthwith."

"Do what you like, Massa Harvey," replied the nigger, "if you can only keep this poor infant side ob young Massa Jack."

"Very good, said Dick. "What name shall we give our dark friend?"

They all had something to suggest.

"Sambo," said one.

"Snowball."

"Pluto."

"Beauty."

But none of these quite hit their fancy.

Young Jack was seated on the knee of Jex, and seeing a book peeping out of his pocket, said:

"What have you got there, Master Jex?"

"Dat, sar, am a good book, one I read and sing from. It make me feel nice all ober."

"Why, dad," cried Jack, "it is a hymn-book. All right, Jex, I know what your name shall be. Dad's got his Monday for a servant, and as you are a good nigger, we will call you Sunday."

"Dat will do bery well, sar," said Jex; "me like that name. Sunday sound grand."

Sunday as a name for Mr. Jex, was put to the vote.

"Carried unanimously," cried Dick. "You hear?"

"Yes, sar," said Jex.

"Henceforth you are to be known to fame as Sunday, Jex."

Monday was very pleased to hear this resolution carried, for he could not have endured the presence of a fellow servant known by thirteen or fourteen syllables, while he had to put up with two. Poor Hilda remained very unwell. The doctor attributed it to the scenes of excitements which they had undergone of late, and he prescribed change of air. Harkaway had taken a house and grounds in an adjoining state, and to it they removed. There lives passed on smoothly for a time, and Hilda, by degrees, recovered her strength. The tranquility of the place had effect on Mole and the two negroes. The former, for the want of occupation, dropped into his old vicious courses; and soaked himself in drink. The darkies had a tussle for supremacy.

Monday felt that his dignity was hurt by being put upon a level with his new-made and newly-christened fellow servant. Endless were the discussions which they had upon one great topic—

the precedence of the two countries—America and England. Monday was a staunch upholder of the old country. Sunday contested boldly that the new country could lick creation in a mere canter.

The discussions between the two niggers were renewed daily. Monday had travelled over Europe, and Sunday had never quitted the state where he was born, or, locally speaking, "raised."

Consequently Monday looked down upon his brother darkey.

He let Sunday see it, too.

Now, the dispute between the two sable disputants grew so warm, that it almost looked as if they were coming to blows, at which point young Jack thought fit to interfere.

"I'll tell you what," said young Jack; "we shall have to hold an official inquiry into this."

"What's that, Massa Jack?" asked the American nigger, Sunday.

Monday turned up his ebony nose in contempt.

"An officious inquiry, nigger," he said, loftily, "am a speeshy of court partial, dat's what it am."

Sunday looked humiliated.

But he was never hard up for an answer.

"We don't know nuffin about them sort in dis 'ere free and enlightened 'country," he said.

"Don't wonder at dat," said Monday.

"Come, come," cried young Jack, "this will never do. You two shall be friends, but we will first have your dispute settled. What do you say, Monday?"

"Berv well, sar," said Monday. "Appoint a day, and I will come in my new coat and show dis nigger I am a great man in discussion, and will make him say him know nothing."

It was arranged that the party should meet for the settlement of the question the next day. Monday was resolved to overawe his adversary. So he prepared an elaborate costume of a strange military character. Hence he would take a rise out of the illiterate nigger, and come off with flying colors. Young Jack enjoyed the joke. When the day came, young Jack assumed his sailor dress that he had worn on board of the good ship "Prospero." Sunday was the first to put in an appearance before the court, which was composed of young Jack, Mr. Mole, and Nero the Monkey. Nero was in high feather. He capered about in a nightcap that young Jack, his master, had given him, and, secretly prompted by the latter, prepared to take a delight in dodging Mr. Mole to get hold of a bottle containing what Mr. Mole called refreshment.

(N. B.—It bore a suspicious resemblance to rum.)

Sunday had not been long present when there arose a great noise from the other end of the plantation. They looked up. A warrior was approaching. The colored laborers of the plantation gathered about the military hero as he marched majestically along, and hailed him with a precious row.

Who could the imposing figure be advancing with such military steps?

It was Monday. The Prince of Limbi was gorgeously got up. His scarlet swallow-tailed coat, his breeches, boots and spurs, all combined to give you the idea of a hero of a hundred fights. He wore a cocked hat, too, and flowing plume of many colors, that put the finishing stroke to his splendor.

When the comparatively sober Sunday caught sight of his formidable rival, his heart sank for a moment.

"Oh, my, Massa Jack, don't he look grand?"

Poor Sunday was struck with admiration. It was a sight to see the Limbian prince leaning upon his sword, striking a war-like attitude. Monday, on facing his adversary, gave him a stiff military salute, which rather puzzled him. Sunday did not know whether to take it as a compliment, or as a defiance. So he only grinned.

"Monday," said Mr. Mole, with a hiccup, "where did you get that splendid make-up from?"

"No matter, Mr. Mole," said Jack; "we must proceed to business."

The parties did not wait to be called, but Monday, in gorgeous array, stepped forward.

"Well, den, Massa Jack," said Monday, "the fact is—"

"Stop, stop!" cried Mr. Mole.

"What am de matter, sar?"

"You mustn't speak to Master Jack," said Mr. Mole, with a hiccup, "but address yourself to the president of the court."

"That's me," said young Jack, hitching his trousers and making a bow.

"Well, den, massa—dat is," corrected Monday, "Mr. President of the court—"

"Of this honorable," suggested Mr. Mole.

"Horrible court," added Monday, "dat ignorant nigger dere—"

"Stop, stop!"

"What for?"

"You mustn't abuse the other side," said Mr. Mole.

"I'm not abusing him," said Monday; "I only say that of all de ugly, ignorant niggers—"

"Stop, stop; that's unparliamentary," said Mr. Mole.

Monday paused, then said:

"Oh, you get out, Mr. Mole."

He did not know the meaning of unparliamentary, but continued:

"Sunday pretends dat de ole country is not to be compared wid America."

"Can't hold a candle to it," affirmed Sunday.

"Get along," began Monday, shaking the long sword in the scabbard.

Young Jack interrupted him.

Stop a bit," he said, with the gravity of a lord chief justice, "let's hear some reasoning; we don't want a row."

"Hear, hear!" said Mole.

And then he took another suck at his bottle, and leaned against the tree at the back—partly to rest, but chiefly to steady himself. The disputants began again.

"Stop, stop!" cried Jack; "you are out of order, gentlemen. Now, Mr. Sunday, just explain your reasons for your patriotic boast."

Nothing loth, Sunday opened fire in this fashion:

"Because, axing your pardon, Mr. President of this horrible court, because de ole country am used up dry, and because dis is a free young land wid go-ahead notions, a free and enlightened constitution. Dere, sar," he added, looking defiantly at Monday, "dat's my platform!"

"Hear, hear!" from Mr. Mole.

"Bravo, Sunday," cried young Jack.

"Go on, Monday, old boy," said Mr. Mole.

"And isn't de ole country's constitution a free and enlightened one?"

"No, you go along."

"Why, you ignorant nigger," said Monday, with a sneer and a chuckle, "don't you know dat dis here constitution am only a copy of de ole country's?"

"What of dat, you old nigger?"

"Don't you know," continued Monday, "dat de sun never sets upon de British empire? Don't you know, sar, dat dat flag," he added, pointing to the Union Jack, which was planted beside the tree under which the controversy was taking place, "dat flag commands de respect, sar, of de whole world?"

"And what does dat other flag command?" demanded Sunday, pointing to the star-spangled banner, which stood beside the British colors.

"Not much," said Monday, with a contemptuous laugh.

Sunday was nettled, so he fired up and rattled away at him.

"Not much? Don't dey, by golly! Why, de star-spangled banner could gib all de world a whipping."

Monday contradicted this most vehemently.

"Never, sar; you could not come near us, could he, Massa Jack?"

"Not if we had the proper people about us, I suppose."

"That's it," said Mole.

"Yes," said young Jack, "if we only had two or three brave men like Mr. Mole at our head, we could beat every nation."

"Oh, no," said the modest Mole, "perhaps not, although Washington was certainly—"

"Washington!" exclaimed young Jack, "where would Washington have been if you had had the command of the British armies?"

"Where, indeed?"

"No matter what the war might be about, if such a man as Mr. Mole should be there, why—"

"Please draw it mild, Jack," said Mr. Mole.

He was sucking at the bottle, and fast waxing helpless.

"Well, my 'pinion is," said Monday, clenching his fist and shaking it at Sunday, "my 'pinion is dat one Englishman can lick ten Yankees any day."

"And my 'pinion," retorted Sunday, "is dat half a Yankee could eat a village of Britishers."

A loud cry from Mr. Mole interrupted the discussion.

"Hullo! Jack, stop him, stop him, take him off; he's got hold of my bottle."

They turned round, and perceived the cause of the outcry. Nero the monkey had been intently watching the drunken tutor's movements for some time, and seizing his opportunity, he made a vigorous dash at the rum bottle.

Mole struggled desperately for it. Over they went, the monkey on the top of Mole. Then Nero, grinning and showing his teeth, scampered off with his prize, and climbed up into the tree. Mole jumped up, and staggered in pursuit of Nero.

"Thieves!" he cried; "thieves, give me back my bottle."

Nero, however, was out of reach, and out of danger, grinning every time he took the bottle from his mouth. At last the contents, being over-proof rum, burnt his throat, so he threw it from him, and by chance caught poor Mole in the center of the back and floored him.

CHAPTER XV.

HARKAWAY and his friends lived on happily. But one day he received a letter, inviting him to visit New York. It was from Daniel Pike, alias Silly Webb.

"To JOHN HARKAWAY, ESQUIRE.

"DEAR SIR,—If you like to run over here, I think I can provide you with some amusement. They are here, and, unless I am very much mistaken, I can show them to you.

"Yours to command,

"DANIEL PIKE.

"P. S.—My poor pal mends slowly. Before we are much older, I shall cry quits with the fellow who has nearly taken the life out of him."

Jack Harkaway was like an old war-horse at the smell of fire. He resolved immediately to be off.

Harvey was not less resolved to go with him. Young Jack pleaded hard to be one of the party, and, as they had never yet seen New York, Mrs. Harkaway gave her reluctant consent. The day after their arrival in New York, a Mr. Webb was announced, and the well-known London detective was shown up.

"You see," said Harkaway, "we have accepted your invitation."

"Very glad," said Mr. Pike, shortly.

"I only reached New York last night," said Harkaway.

"I know."

"And had scarcely time to send to you to let you know where we were staying."

"No matter."

"By the way, though, how did you find us out?"

The English detective chuckled quietly.

"It's my business to find people out."

"So I perceive," returned Harkaway, drily.

"I am glad you did not bring Mr. Mole with you."

"Mole?"

"Yes. It was better that only you and Mr. Harvey should have come; but as Master Jack is here, we must look after him."

Harkaway was considerably puzzled at this.

"Pon my life, Mr. Pike—"

"Webb, if you please," said the detective.

"Well, then, Webb, you appear to know more of my own movements than I do myself."

Webb smiled.

"It is simpler than you may suppose," he said; "but the fact is, that the business upon which I am engaged has become even far more serious than I at first expected."

"How so?"

"By reason of Hunston and that brigand fellow being in league with the murderer I am after."

"Emmerson?"

"Yes."

"They are a dangerous lot," said Harkaway.

"Yes, they will not shrink at robbery or murder."

"No, Hunston would shrink at nothing, and as for Toro—"

"The man I most mistrust is Emmerson," said Webb. "He's a cleverer scoundrel than either, and he is really to be approached with the greatest caution when he is in league with two such desperate customers as your friends."

"Friends?" said Jack; "foes, you mean."

"Well, if you should ever come across this Emmerson, be on your guard against him, for he is one of the softest-spoken fellows you ever met, and yet he'd think no more of knifing you than of peeling an apple."

"How romantic," said Harvey, with a smile; "but I and old friend Jack care not for them."

"No," exclaimed Jack; "we have passed through too many dangers together to fear any man, but you excite one's curiosity."

"That you do," added Dick.

"I should vastly like to see this redoubtable Emmerson," said Harkaway.

"You would? Seriously?"

"Of course."

"And so should I," added Harvey.

The detective eyed the two steadfastly for awhile, then said:

"You shall."

"When?"

"To-night."

"To-night?" cried Dick. "Where?"

"At the 'Asteroid,' as it is called," was the reply. "One of the most notorious gambling dens of New York, and to surprise you, it is partly kept by Emmerson, Hunston, and Toro the brigand."

"How strange," said Harkaway.

"A friend of mine—a very brave man in the force here—will get us in quietly. We shall go about eleven. I will fetch you at nine o'clock."

"Nine?"

"Yes."

"Is it far?"

"No, but we must change our skins."

"Why?"

"Because, if Hunston or Toro recognized you, it would spoil all. Emmerson is as keen as a razor, and he has the gift of disguising himself—face, form, walk, voice, all—in a way that is little short of marvelous, so beware of speaking to anyone. There will be great danger."

"Fear not, we will be cautious, and hold our own."

"At nine we will visit Saul Garcia's."

"Is that the theatrical wardrobe man?"

"Yes. He's a regular artist in his way, and will turn you out as President Grant, the Prince of Wales, or Queen Victoria," said the detective.

CHAPTER XVI.

YOUNG Jack felt lonely when he saw his father and Harvey go off, so he strolled out to view the city by night.

"What shall I do?" thought Jack.

Then, after a moment's pause, he suddenly cried:

"I have it. I will go for a walk, and as it is late, Nero shall go with me. Come along, Nero. We will have a ramble together."

And the monkey seemed very glad to go.

"I hope no harm will happen to dad," said young Jack to himself. "However, he and Harvey are together, and it would go hard with any six who ventured to attack them."

Young Jack was like his father; he knew very little what fear meant. He walked and ran with Nero until he began to think that it was time to turn back, for it was getting late. But now he could not, for the life of him, recollect the way. There was no one about to ask the way back to the hotel.

"This is precious awkward," thought Jack. "What a dismal part of the town this is. It reminds one of the catacombs. And hark! What was that?"

A low, dismal groan came along on the breeze. Young Jack started and turned sharply round. Young Jack was not a coward. He stood and listened.

"This is not pleasant, in the dead of the night," thought Jack.

The stillness was again broken by a hollow groan. The next minute young Jack felt ashamed of himself. So he pulled himself together.

"Was it my fancy?" he asked himself. "I thought I heard something—ha! again that hollow groan!"

Yes, again. There could be no mistaking it this time. It was a low, yet long-drawn wail of anguish.

Some poor creatures was evidently suffering. He followed the direction of the sounds, and when next he paused, for fresh indications to guide him, he was so close that he could almost hear the sufferer speak.

"No, no, Noll," said a faint voice, which sounded like a youth's; "keep your jacket on. You'll catch cold."

"No, I shan't, it's quite hot," said a sturdier voice, in remonstrance. "Let me put it round you, Harry?"

"No, no; let me die."

Then followed another moan, which told of keen suffering.

"Come, come, Harry, dear," said the other, in a half-choking voice; "bear up; the night will soon be over, and then —"

"Yes, then," added the suffering boy, "then we can starve or die by daylight, instead of in this dreadful darkness."

Jack could listen no longer. The allusions to starvation and death were too much for him. He turned the corner sharply, still followed by Nero, and the next moment was facing the two boys. They were lads nearly of his own age.

One was perhaps thirteen; the other about fifteen. The youngest was pale, thin and wan.

His hollow cheeks and deeply-sunken eyes told a tale of slow starvation.

The other showed it less.

His more robust temperament bore better up against the terrible privations.

Jack faced them unnoticed.

"Can't I help you?"

This was said in a kind voice.

The two boys looked up with a sudden start.

"Do you want anything? I am only a boy like yourselves," said Jack, "but fortune has perhaps been more kind to me than to you."

There was a moment's hesitation. They saw that they had to do with a lad of their own years, and this gave them courage.

"We do want something," answered the elder of the two.

"What?"

"Bread."

"Have you got no home?"

"No."

"Nor friends?"

"None."

"What?" said Jack, "no father or mother? What do you mean to do?"

And the tears rose in Jack's eyes.

"Starve here, perhaps," replied the younger boy, bitterly; "perhaps jump into the water, if our strength holds out to carry us as far."

Young Jack was greatly shocked at this.

"Commit suicide?" he exclaimed. "Poor boys! how dreadful!"

"Better that than die like a dog here," said the poor boys.

It was very sad to hear a lad of his years speak with such bitterness.

"We haven't a friend nor relation in the whole world; we haven't home nor shelter; we have not tasted food for two days, and nothing can help us—nothing, nothing."

And the elder boy threw his arms round the neck of his younger brother and cried bitterly. There was a depth of misery in their manner that sent a tingling sensation across young Jack's heart.

"Come with me," he said; "come home with me to the hotel and you shall have all you want."

The two boys stared as young Jack spoke. The appearance of this deliverer was so sudden and so

unexpected that they looked upon it almost as something more than natural.

"Come," said Jack, placing his hand kindly on the shoulder of the younger boy.

"Is it far to go?"

The boy spoke in a weak and plaintive voice.

"I hardly know."

"Don't know?"

"No, I have lost my way wandering about. You can do me a service by coming with me. You know your way about, I suppose?"

"Every street—every nook and corner."

"Come along, then."

He gave them the name of the hotel, and they both knew it quite well. But before they had got any distance, the sicklier and younger boy fell so weak that he was forced to give up. What was to be done?

"You know the way now?" said the eldest of the two boys to Jack.

"No; but if I did, what of that?" said young Jack. "The agreement was that you were to go with me to the hotel and sup—"

"You are very good; but you had better give it up."

"What for?"

"They wouldn't care," was the bitter reply, "to see you bring two beggar boys into their fine hotel."

"You are no beggars," answered young Jack; "you didn't beg—I invited you."

"But my poor brother Harry can go no farther."

Young Jack was a boy of quick impulse. He glanced up and down the street; there was no vehicle in sight, so he caught hold of the poor, sickly boy and lifted him to his back, saying:

"Now, my young friend, I'll give you a jolly good ride, and no extra charge."

Then calling to Nero, young Jack said:

"Now, Nero, do as I do; take one on your back."

Nero, who at all times considered it his duty to imitate his master, had the elder boy on his shoulder in a moment.

"Don't be alarmed," said Jack; "my good old monkey won't hurt you. Now, then, Nero, off we go."

But before they had gone far, Jack's sharp young ears detected the sound of footsteps.

"Who can it be coming this way?" thought young Jack.

Then, as the man came reeling round the corner, Jack shouted:

"Mr. Mole, by jingo!"

It was, indeed, the worthy professor, rather unsteady on his legs, and armed with a long pipe and a bottle.

"How came you here?" asked Jack.

"Well, my boy," said Mole, "I have just come over for the night to see you, but must return quickly to take care of your mother."

"Now, Mr. Mole, you have just come up in time to relieve poor Nero of his burden."

"My boy, I must positively decline to make myself a beast of burden."

"You make a beast of yourself another way," muttered young Jack.

"What's that, my dear boy, you say?"

"We must get home," replied young Jack, evasively. "Do you know the way, Mr. Mole?"

"Straight ahead. Forward, my brave Britons! I'll protect you in the rear. Hoorah! Jack, my boy, you are a brave lad."

Luckily the hotel was not far off, and they soon reached it.

* * * * *

"Mr. Harkaway has not returned, sir," said the waiter to young Jack.

Jack felt just a little bit uneasy at this. However, he ordered supper for the two poor boys and himself. When the supper was concluded young Jack questioned them about their lonely condition. Their history was full of sadness. Their mother had been an American woman, their father an Englishman. The former died about a twelve-month before, and a change came over their father from that very date.

Drink reduced him in circumstances, and what this began the gaming table completed, until one fatal night a ruined gamester, named John Girdwood, shot himself. And this John Girdwood was

the father of the two poor boys, Oliver and Harry

CHAPTER XVII.

"SAUL GARCIA," said Mr. Pike to Harkaway and Dick, "is one of the most extraordinary men you will meet with in his way. This is his shop."

Here he rapped on the glass door, and, as it was opened, Mr. Pike continued:

"Hullo! you are not Garcia."

The man who let them in was a curious-looking Jew, with shaggy, iron-gray eyebrows, and hair to match.

"Where is Garcia?" repeated the detective.

"Come in gentlemen," said the Jew, who lisped very much. "Mithter Garthia ith out."

"We wanted to see Saul himself. Are you his assistant?" asked the detective.

The Jew nodded.

"I am, thir. I do moth of the work, Thaul getth the credit; but he don't give none, not Thaul. He, he, he! You excuthe my little joke."

Mr. Pike eyed the Jew sharply.

"Well, I want you to rig us out in a complete change from top to toe."

"All three?"

"Yes."

"Take a seat."

At this moment a footstep was heard in the passage without. But before the door could open, the assistant stepped quickly out into the passage.

Here he was confronted by a man who was the very counterpart of himself.

"Don't go in, Garcia," said the assistant, hurriedly; "there are some people there I am very much interested in. I want to do your work for you: I shall dub up handsomely."

It was strange how very different his voice and manner both were now. Garcia made some feeble remonstrance, but promises of a heavy bribe induced him to consent at once. The assistant then returned. He began by brushing back Mr. Pike's closely-cut locks, and then he fitted him on a wig with a bald crown and scanty light brown hair. Next he dabbed his cheeks and forehead with ochre, dexterously applied with a hare's foot, and touched his eyebrows with a soft pencil. In the space of ten minutes he was transformed from Daniel Pike into a German professor of mature age.

"Capital," said Harkaway.

"Excellent," added his friend Harvey.

"Now for you, thir," said the Jew assistant.

Harkaway was rigged up in a beard and curly black hair, and a semi-military dress, which changed him very effectually indeed, and Dick Harvey was so altered that his best friend would not have known him.

"What do you think of that?" demanded the Jew of Dick.

"Very good."

"And yourth, thir?"

"Quite satisfactory," returned Harkaway.

"Glad to hear it," said the Jew, glad to hear it. Why, you couldn't have a better get-up if you'd been Protean Bob himself."

"And who is Protean Bob?" asked Harkaway.

The Jew assistant stared very hard at them.

"You're thtrangerth here?" he said.

"Yes."

"What of that, though?" said Pike.

"Why, don't you know that Protean Bob ith Emmerthon?"

The detective gave a slight start.

"Emmerson?"

"Yeth."

"Do you know him?" asked Pike, eyeing the Jew keenly.

"Of courthe."

"Does he come here?"

"Not while I'm here," replied the Jew, quickly. "No fear of that."

"Well," said Harkaway, "what is there to pay?"

"Twenty dollarth."

Harkaway paid the money, and they left. As soon as they had gone, the Jew assistant's manner changed. He stepped up to the door, looked out, and having watched them out of sight to see that there was no chance of their return, he shot the bolts in the door, and drew the curtain to guaran-

tee against observation being taken from without.

"Pike, the English detective!" he said, dropping into a chair. "He has tracked me even here!"

He remained for a few moments lost in troubled thought. Then, starting up again, he said, hurriedly:

"He's after me, and it will be his life or mine."

He walked up and down for a minute or two, muttering to himself. Then, stopping short, he opened the door leading to the passage, and cried hurriedly:

"Garcia!"

"Yes, Mr. Emmerson."

The sham assistant interrupted him eagerly.

"No names, Garcia. Be very careful now, for I am in danger. I want all your prudence this journey."

"Goodness! You perfectly frighten me!"

"Don't be a fool," returned Emmerson, for it was that notorious robber and murderer disguised.

"No, certainly not, Mr. Emmerson."

"Hush!" he cried, half showing a pistol which he clutched in his pocket; "are you mad? Call me by any other name but that."

"What shall I call you, Smith or Davis, or Pike the Detective?"

Emmerson turned sharply.

"Garcia, you have been listening."

"Never."

"You have, and you think to fool me. Now, Garcia, you ought to know better. I am a very good friend, but a devilish ugly enemy. And a Jew more or less in the world is no great matter. Do you understand?" said he, laying his hand firmly on the Jew's arm.

Saul Garcia gave a slight shudder. Robert Emmerson was a known desperado.

Beneath that soft and simple exterior, he concealed the cunning of the fox, joined to the ferocity of the tiger. Truly, the wrong sort of a man to pick a quarrel with.

"There's no need to threaten me, friend," said Saul Garcia. "I'm no traitor."

"For your own sake, I hope not."

"I will be true."

"Good. Now lend a hand, and I'll put you up to earning a bag of money."

The Jew's eyes glistened while Emmerson was changing his disguise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE gaming-house known as the "Asteroid" was a very fine place of its kind. Upon this particular night there was a pretty fair sprinkling of company present. Harkaway, Harvey, and the detective looked about, but no sign of Hunston or Toro could be seen.

"Are you sure that they are here?" Jack asked Pike, in an undertone.

"Certain."

"Neither of them is in the room."

"Neither."

The game being played was *rouge et noir*, and in order to keep up appearances, our three visitors joined in for small stakes. But soon Pike rose from his chair to stroll town the room, followed by Harkaway.

"No signs of them yet?"

"None," said the detective.

"Perhaps they are not here to-night."

"They're somewhere about, I should say."

Suddenly Mr. Pike pressed Harkaway's arm.

"Look there," said Pike, in an eager whisper.

"Where?"

"There—that room."

A door on the left stood half open, showing the interior of one of the smaller rooms. Round a table were four men playing cards. Two of them were of such unusual height as to merit the description of giants. One of these two Harkaway thought was Toro. The second was a stranger. He stood nearly as high as Toro, yet scarcely so broad. But there was an angular look about his arms, chest and shoulders, which told of a wiry, muscular form.

The third was a one-armed man, about whom no mystery need be made.

It was Hunston. The fourth was a dwarf, with the head and shoulders of a colossus. As Harkaway and Pike paused before the doorway to look in, the dwarf's partner pushed aside his cards.

"I shall not play any more, with your permission, gentlemen."

"Nor I," said the dwarf.

And both rose.

Hunston bit his lip, but was silent.

His companion, Toro, however, could not control his disappointment.

"It is generally the custom to give one his revenge when you have been winning," he said.

"Revenge?" replied the tall man, with a light laugh. "I always take my revenge promptly, if anything disagrees with me."

Harkaway did not hear the reply, for just then they were pushed aside by one of the attendants, who passed into the room. He was a Creole, but bore a striking resemblance to a man who left the shop of Saul Garcia within ten or fifteen minutes of their own departure. This half-caste went up to Hunston, bent over him in an attitude of respect, and whispered something in his ear. Hunston started slightly.

"Here?"

"Yes," said the Creole; "don't look up, but they are at the door."

"Pike the detective and the others?" whispered Hunston, eagerly.

"Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Certain; I rigged them up myself."

"I must go, sir," said Hunston, rising and bowing ceremoniously to Toro. "You will please excuse me—"

"You, too?" said Toro, taking the cue with tolerable readiness.

"Yes, sir. I have bad news from home."

"I hope it is nothing serious."

"I trust not, but I must go at once."

"At any rate," said Toro, "your matter is not too urgent for you to join in a bottle of wine before you go."

"If you will let me go then."

"At once."

"And if these gentlemen will join us."

They demurred at first, but gave way to make themselves agreeable.

"I suppose," said Harkaway, in a whisper, "that, having fleeced their victims, they are going to regale them to make them forget their losses."

Pike looked serious.

"I think they are going to play an uglier sort of game."

"You don't mean that?"

"Indeed I do."

"We must see to this."

"See as much as you like, Mr. Harkaway, but don't be too ready to interfere."

"Trust me."

"I do, sir," replied Mr. Pike, earnestly. "We are in a very rum shop here. I'm no coward, but here we are surrounded by a most desperate set. An imprudent step or hasty word from you would bring us into an awkward mess, and perhaps cost us our lives."

The Creole brushed past them. Hunston, filling bumpers round, said:

"I drink to our next meeting, gentlemen."

He drained his glass, set it down, and then bowing, left the room. Passing hurriedly out, he was followed shortly by the colored attendant who had brought the wine.

Proceeding along the passage, Hunston entered a room of which he possessed the key. The Creole followed closely at his heels, closed the door after him, and hurriedly brought out of a cupboard a bottle of some effervescing drink. Hunston drank its contents.

"That Italian fool, Toro," said the dark-complexioned man, who was a croupier, "will spoil all. Did you do anything clumsy?"

"No."

"Why did they want to leave off so soon?"

"I can't say."

"Well, that is of little matter. I tell you there is something up. Pike, the London detective, is here."

"But who for?" said Hunston.

"Perhaps for me, perhaps for you. Perhaps both."

"What do you propose to do, then?"

"I have scarcely thought it over yet. At all events, this is a moment when we want all our wits about us, and not to fuddle our brains in hocus-

sing a player for the sake of a few hundred dollars."

"True, but now what is to be done?"

The Creole, who was Protean Bob, otherwise the notorious Emmerson himself, looked serious.

"If Pike is here after us, and there can't be much doubt about that, he is of course in league with the police here."

"You think so?"

"I'm sure so."

"Phew! This looks desperate."

"The best course for us would be to clear out, to make a moonlight flitting of it."

"To-night?"

"Yes."

"We have this one great advantage over them, they are not aware that we know them."

"True."

"Shall we consult Toro?"

"Or leave him?"

"I scarcely know, the overgrown fool is more plague than profit. He only shows up to advantage in a free fight. Yes, we had better glide away alone."

* * * * *

While they were talking there, Toro having drained his glass, begged the two strangers to excuse him for awhile, and stepping hurriedly across the large room, he went straight to the refreshment buffet in the farther corner. Here he gulped down quickly the contents of two small bottles. This proceeding was of course watched with considerable interest by Mr. Pike and Harkaway.

"What did I tell you?" said the detective.

"What?"

"Do you see?—seltzer. That is the antidote, I suppose."

Harkaway understood it all now.

All considerations of prudence were forgotten now, and he made a hurried resolve to go and warn the strangers.

"Keep him occupied for a minute or two."

"What for?" asked the detective in some alarm.

"I'll not be a moment."

"For your life's sake, nothing rash."

"Trust me."

"Supposing they are part of the den?"

This made Harkaway pause, and think seriously for a moment.

"It is not probable. At any rate, I will risk it; go and keep Toro engaged. See, he is returning. I think."

There was no time to remonstrate, for Harkaway had gone off to the ante-room. So the detective, with the purpose of avoiding an immediate rupture, crossed the saloon and engaged Toro in conversation. Harkaway slipped into the little room, and seeing one of the gentlemen about to raise his glass to his lips, he hurriedly took it from his hand.

"How now, sir?" cried the big man, rising with anger.

They were startled at Jack's unceremonious conduct, but Jack said hurriedly:

"Forgive my seeming rudeness. Do not drink; I have reason to fear the wine is drugged. Take no notice; get some seltzer immediately, drink of it, but above all, take no notice of what has occurred. I believe our lives may soon be in danger."

And then, before they could offer a word in reply, Harkaway was gone. The two strangers were taken by surprise at the startling information.

"Is it possible?" said one.

"True or false," returned the dwarf, sturdily, "it is worth while to take the precaution. The remedy can't hurt."

So they went in search of the seltzer water. Now, just as they had taken it, there was a loud outcry, and in another moment the whole room was thrown into confusion. A loud voice was heard denouncing the croupier or banker of the table. The speaker was Harvey.

"It is a swindle!" he cried, jumping up, and seizing the man's hand.

The man struggled to withdraw, but Harvey held him fast. The croupier dived into his pocket with his disengaged hand, and drew forth a revolver, which he presented at Harvey.

"Leave go your hold, or you are a dead man!" he cried.

Suddenly the hand holding the revolver was stricken up from behind, and down went the revolver, Jack Harkaway almost immediately pouncing upon it.

The croupier flew at Jack, and was met by an ugly blow, like the hit of a steam hammer, straight from the shoulder, and down he fell. A scene of the wildest confusion ensued, in the midst of which some one put out the lights.

Then there was a general rush for the door.

"Jack!" cried Harvey.

"Hullo!"

"Where are you?"

"Here, old boy."

The voice sounded near the door.

So Harvey fought his way manfully there, joining Mr. Pike, and presently they found themselves in the street, but no Jack Harkaway with them. Harkaway was making for the door himself when he heard Dick Harvey's voice.

"Dick's in danger," he thought.

And Harkaway was not the man to desert his friends in danger, let the odds be what they might. He could have got clear with the rush to the door then had he gone on. He paused, thinking Dick was not out. Next moment he heard the banging of heavy, massive doors, and the shooting of bolts. Then Harkaway heard a rush of feet along the passage. Suddenly the gas was turned up.

Then a cry of wild exultation burst from a familiar voice, and Jack saw four men facing him.

Four enemies! Hunston, his enemy from boyhood! Toro, the brigand! Emerson, the murderer! And the croupier! Four to one! All desperate men, who would think no more of taking his life than of rattling a dice box. Harkaway stared surprised at the odds; then, plucking up his courage, stood bravely at bay.

CHAPTER XIX.

JACK HARKAWAY the elder was left in a very critical position. In the skirmish at the "Asteroïd" gambling house, Harkaway had held back for awhile, fearing that Dick Harvey was still inside, and had thus been surprised and cut off. And he stood alone, facing four desperate adversaries. Hunston, the bitter foe of his whole life; Toro, the giant and ex-brigand; Emerson, the assassin and felon; and their creature, the croupier of the gaming table. Harkaway was astounded. It was a fearful predicament. He knew that but too well.

His thoughts flew back to his dear boy and his Emily, and for one brief moment his heart sank. One brief second, no more. And then no shade of fear was there for himself. His heart never quailed in the presence of danger. Hunston, not thinking that Jack could recollect him, was the first to speak.

"Who are you?"

"I'll tell you that," replied the croupier, promptly, "he is the friend of the thief who kicked up all the row."

"He's no thief," retorted Jack Harkaway, boldly, "but an honest and braver man than anyone here."

"You are evidently just as great a fool as he is," said Emerson; "as rash with your tongue; so rash, in fact, that I must prescribe a remedy."

"Name it," cried Hunston, eagerly.

"Well," said the English murderer, looking spitefully at Jack, "cut his tongue out."

"Huzzah!" cried Hunston; "a noble fancy."

It was, indeed, the kind of vengeance he would like to take upon his old enemy.

"Brag's a good dog," said Harkaway. "You know the old proverb."

"Holdfast's a better, eh?"

"That's it."

"Then I'll prove the better dog," cried Hunston, rushing in upon him.

Just as he got within range, Harkaway let fly with his right hand straight from the shoulder spank upon the nose. Down dropped Hunston, felled like an ox beneath the poleaxe. The other three closed in upon Harkaway simultaneously. And now it looked as if the brief fight was over.

Jack Harkaway braced himself up for real hard work.

All his wit, all his activity, all his strength, would be wanted here to give him even a very brief respite.

He gave a sharp glance at the three desperate men advancing upon him, and calculated which was the weakest opening for him to attack. He had soon decided. Emerson, the leader. Quick to act as to think, Harkaway feigned to rush at Toro, but darting suddenly aside, he threw himself upon Emerson, and taking him completely by surprise, hurled him to the ground.

Then he dashed to the other end of the room. Every moment made it more desperate, more fearfully dangerous for Jack Harkaway. Jack's pluck was good, and his readiness of action was much in his favor, yet a prolonged fight could only end in one way. He would be at their mercy. It was but a question of time. Jack must have known this, yet it did not make him falter for an instant, it did not cause his arm to fall less heavy any time he struck his cowardly foes.

Hunston and Emerson having both been felled by Jack's strong right arm (the "auctioneer," they used to call it in his fighting days), those two were not so forward in the pursuit of their slippery victim as were Toro and the croupier.

The latter was naturally the more nimble of the two, and so, unfortunately for him, he found himself in at close quarters with Jack before his friends were half across the room.

"This is a regular dinner," said Jack, to himself. "I'll take it out of his ugly mug, whatever I get after."

Quick as lightning, he bored in upon the croupier. There was no time for the unfortunate man to guard. Harkaway's fists bored him down like a battering ram, and in that one doughty blow he so decorated his frontispiece that it spoilt his beauty for many a long day. It was a sight to see our old friend Jack strike out at the cowards, for cowards they were to attack one man. But soon over and over rolled the croupier like a cricket ball. As soon as this was done, Jack Harkaway sprang up on the counter. He was now by the refreshment bar, to which allusion has been made, and seizing one of the nearest bottles, he hurled it at Toro, who was now close in upon him.

It took effect upon Toro's head, and smashing against it, made him howl mightily. However, it only served to steady him in his rush. Then on they came in a body to attack. Now Jack gave a sharp glance about, calculating the chances.

They were pitilessly against him. However, he kept a good heart—there was, indeed, scarcely time for funk—boldly faced them, saying:

"Come if you dare; I fear you not. Come one, come all. Jack Harkaway can die, but his enemies shall not live to exult over his death."

"Will you give in?" challenged Hunston.

"No," retorted Harkaway. "Do you think I do not know you, villain? Give in? Ha, ha! You, above all men, should know that giving in is not one of my weaknesses."

"Then in upon him!" shouted Hunston.

Jack snatched up a chair from behind the bar, and driving it down violently, wrenched the back off. One more snap, and he held one of the legs of the chair; a poor arm wherewith to defend himself against four powerful men. Now, Hunston's invitation to charge did not meet with a cordial response from his companions, and although they would have liked to have seen him dead at their feet, they could not help fearing him and yet admiring him for his cool pluck. They had each had a taste of Jack's quality. Jack Harkaway, perched upon the counter, armed with ever so poor a weapon, was more formidable to look at than Jack Harkaway on their own level, with no better weapons than nature's to help him through.

"Down with him!" cried Hunston, savagely.

"Shall I fetch my barkers and pop him down?" demanded the croupier.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I have my own purpose to fulfil."

"Hang your purpose!" cried Toro, smarting from the blows Jack had given him. "Let us have his blood!"

"So you shall," responded Hunston, with a cruel chuckle, while he fondled his own damaged peeper; "so you shall; plenty of it. But he is to provide us with endless amusement yet, and it would be like the child's trick of cutting open his accordion to look for the music if we were to finish him right off."

Jack returned them a glance of bold defiance.

"Why do you wait?" cried Jack. "I am prepared for you. Shall I commence the attack, as you four seem afraid?"

He knew that if once he fell into their clutches, he must expect scant mercy from them one and all. Now, while Hunston, Toro, and Emerson were facing the redoubtable Jack, the croupier disappeared. Had he faked? Or had he gone for his "barkers," as he called his pistols? The men bore in upon Jack, who looked eagerly about, and girded up his loins for the fray. He did not wait for them to get too near, but seizing a large champagne bottle close to his hand, he grasped it by the neck, and picking out Toro, the giant, cried. "You overgrown beast, take that!"

He swung the bottle round his head, and the next moment Toro fell to the ground. Then he stood handling his weapon like a broadsword, and treated them to two of the best-known cuts. One, two and point.

"One" was Emerson, and he got it by the side of the head.

"Two" was Hunston, and he caught it full across the face; a precious ugly smack it was, too.

At that moment Toro rose from the ground.

"Point!" cried Jack, and Toro had the nastiest touch of all.

It jobbed two of the giant's teeth down his throat, leaving a gash upon his lip that he kept a mark of to his last hour.

"In on him!" they yelled, now thoroughly roused.

Jack fought like a lion. He displayed all his old grand form. But fight like a lion as he did, what could it avail him against such odds? Jack meant to fall fighting, to fall with his face to the foe. And he hammered away as merrily as if he had all the chance of gaining the day. And he decorated the faces and heads generally of his enemies in a way they had by no means reckoned upon. Suddenly he felt his arms dragged down to his sides with a jerk, and he was held powerless and at the mercy of his bitter assailants. How was this? Simple enough. The croupier, who after Jack's fearful visitation upon his face, had preferred strategy to open fighting, had got a long rope from an inner room, and profiting by his old Mexican hunting experience, lassoed poor Harkaway most dexterously.

Another moment, and Jack Harkaway lay panting upon the floor, pressed down by four cruel, relentless foes, powerless, helpless, and at their mercy. It looked bad indeed for Harkaway now. It was indeed a question of minutes.

"We'll have his tongue out at once," said Hunston, feeling for his knife.

Harkaway heard the words and felt uneasy; they were meant for his ear, and Hunston saw Jack Harkaway flinch with feelings akin to delight. It was a triumph to make his old enemy quail. But the feeling of fear was only transient, if indeed it ever existed. And the next moment, Jack raised his head proud and defiant.

"You've not done it yet," he said.

"No, but I will."

"Don't be too sure."

Hunston flourished the knife before his victim's face.

"See that?" he exclaimed, with a fiend-like grin.

"Pah!" said Jack, with ineffable contempt.

Hunston could dally no longer with his victim.

Revenge was now in his own hands.

"Toro," he cried, "tear open Harkaway's mouth."

But Jack still fought tooth and nail—tooth especially—for he fixed Toro through the hand.

A cry of pain and rage escaped the ruffian.

"Press his throat! squeeze him!" ejaculated Hunston.

Nothing loth, Emerson pressed brutally upon Harkaway's windpipe. A little of this went a very long way. Harkaway grew purple. Then

his color deepened; his tongue was at their mercy.

"Now," cried the triumphant Hunston, "for my long-sought revenge."

Jack Harkaway was helpless. But before Hunston could proceed with his diabolical work, a heavy hand floored him. Stunned. Emmerson, with another blow, was sent sprawling in the opposite direction, and Toro was caught by the throat in a grip the like of which he had never felt before. It was the work of an instant. The croupier looked up in amazement. Two men, whose presence had been utterly unsuspected, had put in an appearance at this most critical time. These two brave fellows were the two players whom Toro had greedily endeavored to "hocus," otherwise to drug, and whose schemes had been opportunely frustrated by Harkaway.

The dwarf leaped upon the croupier, and seizing him by both ears, wobbled his head round, until his brain seemed on fire. This uncomfortable gyration he concluded by a vigorous jerking backward, and then he held his man at mercy. The dwarf still held on at the wretched croupier's ears, and bumped his head on the floor, by way of varying the performance. A curious instrument for knocking nauts in, surely. The croupier was not able to say a word.

Crack, crack, crack, went his unfortunate nob, and now a little one in, and he was thoroughly disposed of for a time. Now Toro, finding himself attacked thus in the rear, struggled desperately to get to his feet, and then, with a mighty jerk shaking himself free, he turned to face his assailant. The latter was a long Kentuckian, standing fully as tall as Toro himself. The Italian had the advantage in weight, and he had never yet met the man who could cope with him for sheer brute strength. So he closed upon him. The American, nothing loth, fastened his arms around Toro's huge carcass.

It was a fearful sight to see these two giants locked in each other's embrace, swaying to and fro. But Toro had strength alone on his side, while the American had both strength and skill.

"I have you now, villain!" came in deep tones from the brave American.

What, then, was the brute Toro's amazement, when he found himself lifted off his feet and hurled fairly over his adversary's head.

He fell no light weight. And where he fell he lay still, or nearly still, a slight quiver of his huge carcass, and an occasional dull groan, alone telling that he still lived.

"Jeff, Jeff!" cried the dwarf, at this precise moment.

The other turned, and finding his little friend hard pressed, while protecting the poor Harkaway, by Hunston and Emmerson, he turned sharply round to lend a hand.

"I am with you, lad," he shouted.

Then, catching Hunston by the collar and the waistband, he lifted him up by sheer strength, and with a mighty jerk, hurled him a dozen paces off. Then he planted his fist heavily in the back of Emmerson's neck, and the ruffian dropped without a murmur.

"Now," said he, coolly, turning to the dwarf, "now for the door. I'll carry this poor fellow."

And he picked up Harkaway as easily as he would a baby, and bore him to the door. The enemy tried to arouse and intercept their escape. But that long, raw-boned Jeff, the American, inspired them all with a wholesome respect. A moment more, and they were fairly in the street. Once more was Jack Harkaway out of the toils.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. MOLE started from the hotel early in the morning, and returned to take charge of Emily, Hilda, and her daughter. He was not exactly the sort of a person to leave in charge of a family, for no sooner had Jack Harkaway and Dick Harvey left, than he gave way to his well-known weakness for stimulants. The ruby hue of his nose deepened, and it spread like a rich sunset across his cheeks. His latest fancy was, that it was incumbent upon him to marshal the negro servants upon the plantation and estate generally, in the regular old nigger driver fashion.

The only effect which Mr. Mole's maudlin sever-

ity had upon the colored dependents was to make them laugh a good deal at his expense. However, his latest illusion was not attended with any baneful results. The worst was only the purchase of a Legree hat and whip, and an attempt to grow an imperial or fringe on his chin, which was probably the portrait of Legree, which Mr. Mole had seen in some illustrated edition of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

His pleasantries went all very well with most of the negro servants; but when he tried it on with Monday, our old friend's dignity was touched. The worthy black considered himself upon a footing with the tutor. They were in fact both retainers, with this trifling difference, that Monday rendered some really efficient service for what he got from the family. Mr. Mole called a general meeting of the servants the second day after Harkaway's departure. This was the occasion for high fun amongst the darkies. Mr. Mole paraded them all, men, women, and children, calling over a muster-roll, to the infinite amusement of them all.

"When I was colonel of the Horse Guards Blue, in Old England," said the truthful Mr. Mole, "we were in the saddle at five a. m., winter and summer."

"Be golly, Massa Mole," said Sunday, chuckling, "you bery fierce orsifer."

"Stern, Sunday, not fierce—I was a disciplinarian."

"Oh!"

"When one has once contracted habits of discipline," said Mr. Mole, "it becomes a sort of second nature to command—some of us are born to command."

"Of course, Massa Mold, you look so beautiful and grand."

"Thank you," said Mole, "but, in point of fact, there is a species of military instinct in some of us, which—"

"Massa Mole speaks like a book," said Sunday, producing a bottle of rum from his capacious pocket, and looking slyly round.

As soon as Mr. Mole dropped his eye upon the bottle, he was a lost man.

"Dear me," he said, "I think it is a very warm day, and I really feel terribly thirsty."

He grew thirsty at once on seeing the bottle. Sunday knew his weakness.

"There's nothing like discipline," said Mr. Mole, rearing himself up so as to lose none of his height. "Nothing like discipline for niggers."

"Sunday," he said, "how dare you have that bottle of rum with you? Bring it here, sir, and place it by my side."

"Quite right, Massa Mole," said Sunday, with gravity.

"If we had had lots of discipline, we should never have had any mutiny, never any rebellion in India."

"You think so?"

"I'm sure so."

"Ah, Massa Mole, you much wanted here."

"What for?"

"To keep de folks in order."

Mr. Mole smiled.

"There's not much fear of mutiny here, Sunday," said he, with a patronizing air.

"Dere is just dat, Massa Mole," said Sunday seriously.

"What?"

"Mutiny."

Mole opened his eyes.

"Impossible."

"No, Massa Mole," returned the negro, shaking his woolly head. "Not impossible. It am a fact."

"You don't really mean—"

"I mean," said Sunday, "dat dem niggers is bery peccoliar, and dey'd tink no more ob eating you, Massa Mole, and picking your bones, dan of chivving a 'possum out of a gum tree."

Mr. Mole began to feel, he scarcely knew why, just the least bit uneasy.

"What have they been doing?"

"Nuffin'," answered Sunday. "Dat's jest it, sar. Dey won't do noffin, wus luck, and when we tries to put 'em to it, dey kicks up most awful rampagious."

Mr. Mole pulled a long face.

"This is very serious."

"Bery serious, for I heard dem whisper dat you would boil down well."

"Boil down? Dear me; we ought to get assistance immediately."

"Don't want no 'sistance, Massa Mole," said Sunday. "Habits of discipline, you know, Massa Mole—habits of discipline 'll make it all right; only wants you to face 'em."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Mole, flattered, yet inwardly uneasy.

"Dey'll never dare to disobey a great man like you, Massa Mole."

"No, Sunday."

"And if they dare—"

"We'll show them the meaning of the word discipline," said Mr. Mole, strutting about.

Sunday went off to summon the black servants, men, women, and children, into the presence of the august Mole. The latter was deeply interested in a book, when he heard a loud "Yah, yah!" and the whole tribe came clattering down about him. For a dissatisfied and disaffected people they looked uncommonly merry. Not one of them wore a serious face. Indeed, every man Jack appeared to be laboring under a desire to suppress a smile.

"Oh, there you are," said Mr. Mole, looking up at the mob surrounding him. "Now, I want to talk to you."

"Don't talk, Massa Mole," interrupted one of the darkies. "Gib us a song, ole nigger Mole."

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Mole, aghast.

"A song."

"What, you wretched creatures?" cried Mole. "I sing a song! Never. But I demand you to be serious."

"But we don't; dat's whar it is, Massa Mole, we don't please. So here goes, Massa Mole; you jine in de chorus."

And a nigger at once began in a loud voice:

"Old King Mole

Was a swipecy ole soul,

And a swipecy ole soul was he;

And he called for his prog,

And he called for his grog,

But he never cared nuffin' for tea."

"Yah! yah! Now, den, you dark angels, all togeder:

"And he called for his prog,

And he called for his grog,

But he never cared nuffin' for tea."

Mr. Mole jumped up, and made a rush at the audacious singer, intending to wreak condign vengeance upon him, when a juvenile nigger, who had been distinguishing himself by the boisterousness of his mirth, somehow got between the worthy tutor's legs, and tripped him up. Poor old Mole went sprawling on the ground. Thereupon a wild scene occurred. The niggers, young and old, joined hands in a savage dance around him, to the chorus of:

"And he called for his prog,

And he called for his grog,

But he never cared nuffin' for tea."

"You scoundrels!" shouted Mr. Mole, shaking his umbrella. "I'll flay you alive—you—"

"Once more—chorus!" yelled the lively nigger, whose name was Diogenes Brown.

Round they went again to the same chorus, keeping the circle fast, and defying Mr. Mole's most desperate efforts to get out. At length Mr. Mole grew furious. One wild rush, a lunge with his umbrella, and Diogenes Brown was prodded violently in the wind. Momentarily doubled up, Diogenes Brown howled vociferously. Then recovering himself, he ducked his head, and butted at Mr. Mole, who jumped on one side, allowing poor Diogenes to careen madly past. Now Diogenes pulled himself up short and turned round. The laugh had gone against this mirthful nigger. So he made up his mind to take his turn now.

"You shall repent this," said Mr. Mole, wrathfully. "You think to frighten me, but you shall repent of your audacity, mark my words, for my name is Mole, do you hear?—Mole!"

"You hear what he says," observed the nigger.

"Yah, yah!" responded the crowd, generally.

"And what ought to be done with Mole?"

"Killed!" suggested a voice in the background.

"Drowned!" added another, immediately.

"Hung!"

"Him be nice biled down!" suggested a boy, popping forward saucily.

"What for?"

"Candles."

"No," said Diogenes, as if considering all the various suggestions, very gravely, "ne's not fat enough."

"Roast him over a slow fire," suggested a more inventive nigger. "Make him crackle."

"Good again!" cried Diogenes, who enjoyed Mole's look of blank dismay as those atrocities were coolly suggested.

"Shall I make a fire?" asked one of the boys.

Mole groaned.

"Have you all gone stark, staring mad?" he exclaimed.

They took no notice of his protests of indignation.

"I think we had better not roast him," said Diogenes; "it would make such an infernal smell, as he has no fat on his bones; he'd only frizzle, being such an old bag of bones."

This caused a regular storm of laughter and applause. Yet Mr. Mole could see nothing in it so very laughable. Mr. Mole, however, was no particular judge of a joke.

"Yah! yah! I have got an idea," said Diogenes Brown; "he must be either tarred and feathered immediately, or else he must sing 'Old King Mole' upside down."

"Hurrah!" yelled the niggers, with one voice. "Old King Mole' upside down."

"Now, then, Massa Mole," said Diogenes, with a grin, "what'll you have?"

"A little warm—"

"No grog, no grog," interrupted Diogenes. "Song first."

"Oh, I thought that it was an invitation," said the unfortunate Mole, "to take a little warm rum."

"Now, then, Massa Mole, you're wasting de time of dis honorable company. Which am it to be? Tarring and feathering—or will you stand on your cokernut and chant?"

"Neither, sir," said Mole.

"You must hab one or de oder."

"Never!"

The niggers then kicked up a fearful row, dancing about Mole, and uttering the wildest yells, until the martial spirit of the disciplinarian Mole was momentarily cowed. It was really an alarming effect to see a mob of twenty or thirty negroes, kicking up their pick-axe feet at once, and yelling as though they were undergoing the most hideous tortures. Mole shrank affrightedly before them.

"Bring out de tar," commanded Diogenes Brown, "and let it be hot and thick."

"No, no!" shrieked Mole.

"Will you stand on your cokernut?"

"Stand a cokernut?" repeated Mr. Mole. "I'll stand a hundredweight, my good friends, if you like that refreshment."

"We don't want you to stand no cokernuts," replied Diogenes, "but to get up on your own, and chant, and if you don't double-quick, we mean to tar and feather you. So dere now; dat's our law."

"I'll never do it," cried Mr. Mole. "I'll have you all imprisoned for this—I'll—"

"Will you hab de hot tar?"

"No!" thundered the unhappy Mole. "I don't want it; give it to somebody else."

"No it is for you. Now up you go."

"Never!"

"Bring out de tar, Pompey," said Diogenes to an ebony urchin, who then started off with a laugh that sounded like a cracker exploding.

"Beware!" cried Mr. Mole. "I'd have you beware."

"Bring out de hot tar."

The little nigger came back struggling under the weight of a huge jar, supposed to contain the tar. It was the best substitute they could find; and after all, whether you are covered with molasses or tar matters little, so long as it affords a good hold for the feathers.

Mole gave way at the sight. It was no use holding out any further. Fearful images rose up in his mind of the atrocities of the Indians in our Eastern Empire; of the Africans in their never-ending feuds, and of the horrors perpetrated (ac-

ording to Fenimore Cooper) by "the noble savage" of North America, and his big heart sank. Humble pie is not the most digestible of dishes, but Mr. Mole had partaken of it upon previous occasions, and yet contrived to keep up what he thought to be a dignified appearance.

"Oh, dear me, dear me!" he whined. "I shall never be able to do it."

"Well, den, have de tar."

"Stop—here I go."

And Mole tucked in his "tuppenny," and made a first trial.

"One, two, three and up—"

"Bravo, Massa Mole!" yelled the juvenile niggers with enthusiasm.

"Higher, higher!" ejaculated Diogenes.

Thus urged, Mr. Mole jerked up violently and came down a cropper, like "vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself."

"Oh!" cried he, rubbing himself on the part hurt, "this is more than I expected."

And then you should have heard the niggers laugh when Mr. Mole tried again and found himself suddenly the other way up!

There was one little rascal, for all the world like one of those black rubber babies you have met in the Lowther Arcade, who went frantic with delight.

"Up again, old man!" cried Diogenes.

Mole showed signs of sullen resistance.

"Hot tar!" shouted a nigger.

Up went Mole again. Now much can be accomplished under the influence of fear, and this time he was within an ace of accomplishing it.

But he swerved a little, and down he came, whack! cricking his neck a little. His third essay was made promptly upon the other. He had actually become ambitious by this time of distinguishing himself, and in his eagerness he contrived to hoist his body like a badly-used corkscrew. The niggers absolutely yelled with delight.

"Rayther on de off skew whif," said the critical Diogenes. "Once more, Massa Mole. Now, den, sare; one—two!"

The little India rubber nigger, aided by another, here showed the luckless tutor how it could be done. But the little nigger was held up by the ankles.

"If Massa Mole don't do it dis time," said Diogenes Brown, in an awesome voice, "bring out de tar."

Mole made a frantic attempt, and then rose on his head, with legs wide apart, and with some little manoeuvring managed to find the center of gravity. Up he stuck somehow. A shriek of delight came from the grinning niggers.

But even then Diogenes was not satisfied.

"Now, Massa Mole," he exclaimed, "keep up, and sing away, 'Ole King Mole.'"

"Never!" gasped Mole, nearly choking.

"De tar! de tar! we will wait no longer," cried Diogenes.

Mr. Mole was helpless in their hands, as he chanted up this slightly-altered version:

"Good Mister Mole

Was a sober soul,

And a sober soul was he;

Abjuring grog,

Not caring for prog,

And he stood on his head for a spree."

"No, no!" they shouted, for they would not be put off their own version, which was the composition of young Jack, and had been taught them by him on the sly.

They cried loudly for the original version, and, by dint of threats, were about to prevail, when Sunday and Monday put in an appearance from opposite quarters, both armed. Thereupon, the niggers scampered off in all directions. This had been agreed upon between them; for, of course, although secretly of their own prompting, they could not be supposed to countenance any such indignity being offered to Mr. Mole.

"Well, Massa Mole," said Monday, "they're all gone; don't be afraid now."

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Mole: "afraid? Who's afraid?"

"We thought you were, Massa Mole."

"Never!"

"What was dey doing?" asked Sunday, with an assumption of surprise.

"They?—nothing," replied the unblushing Mole. "I was merely endeavoring to amuse and instruct them at the same time; a lesson on the laws of gravity, with practical illustrations. You see, I rather like standing on my head."

"Bery good, Massa Mole," said Sunday, seriously; "but my opinion is, dat dey'll make short work ob you if dey get a chance—dey're desperate."

"Gracious me! you cannot mean it."

"Yes, sare; you'll hab to run for it."

"Where to?"

"Anywhere—to New York, to Massa Harkaway and de young gentleman."

"What, for assistance?"

"Yes, sare."

Mr. Mole thought that this was really worth considering. They did not leave him after that. But they so worked upon his fears, that he resolved to get off that very night. But what befell our old friend Mole, and how his future life was altered, must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was a mercy for Jack Harkaway that his preservers had put in an appearance so opportunely, for never in the whole course of his life had he had a narrower squeak. They had not got a great distance from the gaming house, when two men came up to them at a sharp trot.

"There he is," said one of them.

"No," said the other. "And yet—surely it is."

"Keep clear," replied the Kentuckian, half taking off his coat to prepare for another struggle, "or look out for broken nob's."

"Let me get in front," said the dwarf, springing forward. "Now then, try it on if you dare."

It was rather a comical thing to see this little pigmy protecting his huge companion and the as yet helpless Harkaway.

"You have nothing to fear from us," began one of the men.

"Fear? We don't," retorted the dwarf; "not exactly."

"It is our own friend," said the former speaker, who was none other than Harvey.

"I remember you now," said Harvey's companion to the American. "You were playing in one of the side rooms with two of the thieves."

"Yes."

"And he whom you have there warned you."

"He! Who?" exclaimed the Kentuckian, quickly.

"Why, our poor friend, Harkaway, whom you are carrying."

"Well," cried the big man, in surprise, "blame me if I recognized him."

Jack had by this time revived enough to help himself over the ground, and to thank his two preservers for their timely aid.

"These are friends," he said, smiling faintly.

"Perhaps," responded the big American; "but you don't owe much to their friendship."

This speech cut Dick Harvey to the quick.

"It was no fault of mine, Jack, old boy," he said.

"We thought you had fought out of the place," added Pike.

"Of course you did," returned Harkaway, with warmth; "I know that well; but, as it is, I owe my life to these good gentlemen, for without their help it was all over."

And Jack Harkaway took the hands of the two Americans in his, saying:

"You represent your nation well, for you are both noble fellows, and I thank you."

"I did my best," said Jack, "but four to one were long odds."

"You made a pretty good fight of it alone," said the dwarf. "I saw you playing with them before we came in to help."

They all went off together to the hotel where Harkaway and Dick Harvey were staying. And as they went along, they each explained the part they had taken in the eventful hour of the past. It was the following. Dick Harvey and Pike the detective, when they got into the street, found themselves together, and their first inquiries were

for Harkaway. Not seeing him there, they could only suppose that he had got clear of the house. But as they went on, they grew a little uneasy, and returned to the scene of the fray, with the intention, in case of need, to force their way into the gaming house. When Jack's preservers were asked how they came to be lingering in the gaming house after the row, it transpired that they were still suffering from the effects of the drug which had been administered to them.

Suffering is, perhaps, an exaggerated expression for what they felt. It troubled their heads a bit—just enough to make the little man feel vicious, and resolve to take it out of the scamps who had tried it on. He took a prime vengeance, as you have seen. Just as they were thinking of leaving, the row began in the great saloon.

Then followed a smashing of mirrors and lustres, cries, blows, and the lights turned down.

"Let's keep snug," said Mr. Jefferson to his companion, "and watch what is going forward."

"And collect evidence to make sure of them," chuckled the dwarf.

"Evidence is not much good," replied Mr. Jefferson. "Let us take it out of their carcasses first."

And so it fell out that, when the desperate skirmish began between Jack Harkaway and the four desperadoes, the giant American and the dwarf were still in the gaming house. They had a dim sort of idea that a cowardly and treacherous business was proceeding, yet who were the actors in it they would have been puzzled to explain.

But the cries and taunts that the combatants were exchanging roused the listeners. There is nothing like a strong excitement to chase away the lingering effects of an opiate, and it braced them up for the part they had to play.

To see four men attacking one, was a scene calculated to enlist all their sympathies at once. But they little thought that they were engaged upon the rescue of the very man who had rendered them such signal service.

They all went off to Harkaway's hotel together, and wound up the night's excitement in a gathering and general merry-making.

"Tell us all about it, Jack," said his friend Harvey.

"I will," said Harkaway; "but it's thanks to Mr. Jefferson and to Mr. Brand that I have the power of speech left."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Harvey.

"Why, Hunston's avowed purpose was to cut my tongue out."

A groan of horror greeted this.

"The villain!"

"Villain, indeed! He very nearly managed it, too. I can feel the effects of their brutal fingers upon my throat yet."

And, in point of fact, there was pretty good evidence of the severity of the handling Jack Harkaway had suffered.

Around his throat was a deep black ring of bruises where the brutal hands of the would-be assassins had pressed. While the conversation was proceeding with great animation on all hands, Daniel Pike the detective was observed to be keeping a dead silence. He was thinking. There were certain incidents in the late stirring adventures which bore a deeper significance to him than to the rest of the persons engaged in the business.

"It is evident to me," he said, presently, "that we were known by Emmerson and his fellow scoundrels."

"What!" said Harvey. "In spite of our wonderful disguises?"

"Yes."

"I should scarcely believe that possible."

"It is more than possible," returned the detective; "it is a certainty."

"That would make us doubt Saul Garcia's skill."

"Or rather that of his assistant," put in the detective.

"Scarcely."

"How then could it be?"

The detective had thought the matter over before he pronounced himself, this was evident.

"Do you remember the words of that Jew fellow just before we left?"

"What words?"

"He compared our disguises to Protean Bob's."

"True," returned Harkaway and Harvey, in a breath.

"Which proves that if he was not Emmerson himself, he knew him well."

"Yes, yes."

"And that Emmerson is in the habit of patronizing them."

"He almost admitted as much," said Harvey.

"What if Garcia should be in league with him?"

"Do you believe that to be possible?"

"Everything is possible," replied the detective.

"But to-morrow morning I'll make it my business to sift the matter thoroughly. I wish my old pal was well, for I miss him much."

* * * * *

Daniel Pike was not a man to be put easily off his purpose, once resolved on.

Early upon the following morning he went, in company with a well-known officer of the New York secret police, to the shop of Saul Garcia, the Jew wardrobe man and barber. As luck would have it, they found the worthy Israelite standing upon his own threshold. He recognized Pike's companion at once, as the quick-sighted officer saw. Yet the way in which he was upon his guard in a moment was worthy of admiration.

"Good-morning, Saul," said the American officer.

The Israelite made a profound obeisance.

"Well, gentlemen. Anything I can do for you?"

He wanted to talk to them in the passage, but the American detective, placing a hand on his shoulder, pushed him gently before them into the shop.

"Forward, Garcia; I want a word or two with you in private," he said.

"Private, sir?" said the Jew; "goodness gracious!"

"There's nothing to alarm you in that, Mr. Garcia."

"Oh, dear, no," replied Garcia. "I'm not alarmed at all."

The American detective looked about the place, went to both doors, and having ascertained that there was no fear of immediate interruption, he drew up a chair for himself, at the same time bidding the Jew to be seated.

"I want to ask you a few words concerning a friend and customer of yours," said the American detective.

"Who?"

"One you know well."

"His name?"

"Robert Emmerson," replied the detective.

Saul Garcia never moved a muscle.

He put on a look of well-affected ignorance.

"Don't know him."

The detective looked Saul Garcia fairly into the eyes, as he replied, slowly:

"That's a lie."

The Jew jumped up with an ejaculation of offended dignity, but the officer pushed him back in his chair.

"See here, now, Garcia, don't you try it on. Don't you fool away your own time and mine too, or look out for squalls," said he.

"Really, sir, I don't understand you."

"Don't you?" said the American detective, sharply; "then hang me if you precious soon shan't! Now pay attention; Robert Emmerson's wanted. With your help or without your help we shall have him. If with it, so much the better for you, if without your aid—"

"Well, sir?" said the Jew.

"Why, my honest friend, you will find English and American detectives will be down upon you like death."

"I'm an honest, hard-working man," retorted the Israelite. "and I fear no man, d'ye hear that? d'ye hear that?"

The American detective smiled, and said, softly:

"Oh, yes, I hear it."

"Well, then?"

"But I don't believe it."

"What do you mean?"

"Why that you are champion liar, Saul Garcia, and that the day that we take Bob Emmerson, without owing anything to your information, you will find a search warrant brought in; you will find a regular rout will be made over your place, for

that portable furnace and melting pot, eh, my honest friend?"

The Jew changed color.

"I don't know what you mean," he faltered.

"Don't you? Then you're a fool. Well, do you know what Emmerson is wanted for?"

"No," said the Jew. "What for?"

"Murder!" said the detective, placing his mouth close to the Jew's ear.

"Murder! Whose murder?"

And the Jew gave a frightened start backwards, while the American detective's eyes were fixed on his.

"Now you have heard me," said the American, "no humbug; what of Robert Emmerson?"

"I really—I—"

"I shall ask no more. Look to yourself, for you may be wanted."

He turned again towards the door.

"Well, yes, I confess then—that is, I do know Mr. Emmerson. He has been here."

"I thought so."

"But it is very little I know concerning him."

"Tell that little at once," said the detective, "or else I'm off."

"Dear me! dear me!" groaned the Jew; "Mr. Emmerson is a very dangerous man, and very violent."

"Yes."

"And if I should interfere in his business, my life will be in danger."

"You needn't fear," said the American detective, "for when he's bagged, he will never trouble you again."

The Jew looked eagerly at his questioner.

"Do you think that true?"

"I do."

"He's a dangerous man. He wouldn't mind doing anything desperate, and I don't want to be killed; he's such a devil-may-care rascal."

"You need fear nothing. In the first place he will be, as I tell you, very carefully looked after, and in the next place he will never hear from anybody where we got our information. Now listen to me, Saul Garcia."

"I am all ears," said the Jew.

"As the donkey said," muttered Pike.

"With your help, Robert Emmerson will be lodged in limbo. Mark my words; once there, he will be dead to the world."

The Jew's eyes listened.

He lived in constant fear of Emmerson's violence, and lately had had a series of very ugly dreams about him.

However, once resolved, he made a clean breast of it.

"Emmerson was here last night," he said.

"I thought as much," interrupted Pike.

"He had been trying to make himself up as my assistant, what for I can't say, for he's mighty close, is Bob Emmerson. When some customers came in—"

"Three men?" interrupted Pike, eagerly.

"Yes, sir, and he insisted upon serving them. Do you know that Emmerson is so very violent that I didn't dare to interfere? I had to wait outside."

"In the passage?"

"Yes."

"I see it all now," said Pike, eagerly; "you waited outside, and he took your place."

"Yes."

"And he persuaded the three customers that he was your head man."

"He did—he did."

"And then he changed his dress again, as soon as they were gone."

"Yes."

"For what dress?"

"That of a dark-colored waiter."

Pike could not repress an exclamation.

"I see it as clear as daylight. What an arrant ass I've been! What a laugh the villain has had at me! But I'll have him yet, as sure as my name's Daniel Pike."

"Daniel Pike! Are you Daniel Pike, the English detective?" cried Saul, in surprise.

"Yes."

Saul Garcia was silent, for he had heard of the great English detective.

"Where is Emmerson now?" said the American.

"Really you mustn't press me for that," whined the Jew; "you mustn't indeed, Mr. Silkey."

"Hullo!" exclaimed the American detective. "I thought that you didn't know my name."

The Jew smiled at his involuntary admission.

"Who doesn't know the clever Mr. Silkey?" he exclaimed. "Who doesn't know President Grant?"

Mr. Silkey was less harsh in his tone when next he spoke. Yet he pressed his point just as firmly as ever.

"Now, look you here, Saul Garcia," he said.

"You know that Emmerson is wanted for murder?"

"So you say, sir."

"Yes, murder of a brutal kind," said Pike; "but Silkey will explain."

"I will," replied the American detective.

Then, turning to the Jew, he said:

"It's the murder of one of your people. A Jew, who was a pal of his, rendered Emmerson all kinds of services, and in return Emmerson struck him to the heart with a knife, and followed it up by striking to death an English detective—a pal of Pike's, and his poor friend Percival's brother."

"Now," said Mr. Silkey, "the man whom Emmerson killed could have sold him for a large sum. Think of that; but being bound together by a sort of old friendship, the Jew wouldn't hear of selling him."

"He wouldn't," exclaimed the Jew, much struck by the recital; "and Bob Emmerson killed him; then I'll do for him."

"Quite proper," said Mr. Silkey.

"I will," said Saul Garcia, excitedly. "Can I rely upon you?"

"Keeping dark?"

"Yes."

"Mum's the word," said Mr. Silkey. "I know the man well."

"Of course you do. And he killed one of my people, did he?"

The Jew ran to the door, and peered eagerly out right and left.

Then he came back, and whispered to Silkey:

"What about your friend? Is he true to our cause?"

"Oh, he's right enough."

"He may be; but I don't mean to speak before any strangers."

"Don't fear," retorted Mr. Silkey. "My friend here has traveled all these thousands of miles to take Bob Emmerson, and take him he must or be disgraced forever."

"Very well," said the Jew, evidently now resolved. "I will help your friend."

Then, after a moment's pause, the Jew said:

"Come here close and be cautious. Emmerson is to be found not twenty yards from here, waiting and watching for a favorable opportunity to sneak off."

"Where to?"

"New Orleans."

"Good," said Daniel Pike, smiling at the American detective. "Emmerson's game is over; he's as good as ours."

Was he? We shall see further on.

CHAPTER XXII.

ISAAC MOLE APPEARS ON THE SCENE AGAIN.

"MR. HARKAWAY?"

"Yes, sir."

"What's his number?"

"We'll send up your name, if you please, sir."

"Well, then, young man, I don't please."

"Very well, sir."

"Very well, sir! Do you know to whom you have the honor of speaking?"

"No, sir."

"Then I'll tell you, and you may convey the news to Mr. Harkaway, if you think fit. Isaac Mole, Esquire, B. A., LL. D."

"And A. S. S.," said the waiter.

"No."

"I should have thought so, sir."

"Tell Mr. Harkaway that Mr. Mole will be very glad to meet him at breakfast."

"Yes, sir."

"And—stop, where is Master Jack—I mean, Master John—situated?"

"In the next room to Mr. Harkaway, sir."

"I presume that I may go up to the young gentleman?"

"Really, sir, it is quite against the rules. We should prefer to announce you."

"Very good," said Mr. Mole, with dignity. "I am his tutor and have the total charge of him, but as you please."

"No offence, sir."

"None whatever," returned Mr. Mole. "I shall let the authorities here know that you appeared doubtful as to whether I was not about to clear out the hats and coats in the hall."

"Very good, sir," replied the man, bowing. "I shall know what answer to make to that."

The fact was, that Mr. Mole had only just arrived, and having beguiled the tedium of his journey with rather copious libations, he did not present a very decorous appearance, considering the very early hour. The man, after some hesitation, asked Mr. Mole to step up to young Jack's room.

Up he went with sundry misgivings. What should he say for leaving the ladies once more unprotected? On mature consideration, he would not mention how he had been forced to stand upon his venerable head.

"No—mum about the negro revolt," thought Mr. Mole.

He knocked at young Jack's door.

"Who's there?"

"Me."

"Me—who's me? It sounds like Mr. Mole."

"And so it is Mr. Mole," replied that worthy gentleman. "Mr. Isaac Mole, at your service."

"Mr. Mole!" exclaimed young Jack. "Wait a bit; I'll let you in."

He jumped out of bed as he spoke, and began to slip on clothes. Now, Nero slept in a kind of cupboard, situated in a small passage, connecting young Jack's room with the one in which the two poor fatherless lads had been quartered; and no sooner did the monkey hear his young master stirring, than he capered out of bed to shake hands with young Jack.

"Good morning, sir," said young Jack, making him an elegant bow.

Nero grinned, and replied by a bow, rather more formal and stately, if possible. This tickled young Jack mightily, and he roared again. Thereupon Nero, who knew that his young master was ripe for fun, capered about the room, kicking up all kinds of antics. He began by darting off with young Jack's trousers, just as he was about to put them on. Nero got into them in half a crack.

"Come here," cried young Jack, bolting after him.

Nero waited until Jack was all but on him, and then bolted off, grinning defiance. Jack, in his shirt, laughing until he was powerless to do any good towards recovering his continuations, made another dash and a grab at Nero. But the latter kept up the same tactics. Just as young Jack thought he had got hold of him, off he flew. And then, when the chase got very hot, Nero flew up the bed furniture, and sat looking down upon young Jack from aloft.

"You rascal!" said his young master, shaking his fist at Nero, and trying to look stern. "I believe you could walk on the ceiling like a fly if you only tried. Come down."

Nero's sole reply was to grin, and begin an active hunt for a flea.

In the midst of this there came another knock at the door.

"Are you forgetting me, Master Jack?" said Mr. Mole.

"No, sir."

"You are rather a long while."

"I have just lost my trousers," replied his pupil.

"What?" ejaculated the astonished pedagogue.

Young Jack, ever alive for fun, had a happy thought.

"Nero shall go and greet him for me, since Nero has bagged my bags."

So he beckoned the monkey, who immediately came down from his perch, and hurriedly finished dressing him.

"Here, Nero," said Jack, "take this towel; hold it over your head this way, and he'll think you are drying your face. You understand?" Of course he did. There was precious little that this monkey did not understand.

Jack led him up to the door, and placing Nero in position, with the towel about his head, he opened the door and stood behind it himself.

Mr. Mole rushed in, saying:

"My dear boy!" and commenced hugging Nero. Nero responded most affectionately.

Dropping his towel, he cuddled Mr. Mole right vigorously.

"Ugh!" shouted the tutor. "Who is it? Oh, hang the monkey! confound the monkey! Here, my boy—come and help me, Jack!"

Mole endeavored to shake himself free, but Nero would not be denied. He hung on, caressing Mr. Mole affectionately. Mole roared and rolled all over the room. And the more he roared with fright, the more young Jack laughed with glee.

"Come here, Nero," he said. "Come here, sir."

But Nero would not; he still clung close to Mole, rubbing up his hair, and pulling his ears.

"If you don't get off my back," said Mr. Mole, panting with his exertions, "I shall do you a mischief."

Nero's sole response was to transfer Mr. Mole's hat to his own head. Mole wriggled all over the room, but Nero was like the little old man of the sea in "Sinbad the Sailor." Nothing could displace him.

"Do you mean to take him off, Jack?" ejaculated the tutor, now goaded to fury; "or shall I slay him?"

"Sorry I can't get him away, Mr. Mole," said young Jack, half convulsed with laughter. "I hope he won't hurt you."

"Hurt me!" said Mr. Mole, indignantly. "He'll kill me."

"I hope not, sir, but he has been showing a craving for human flesh of late."

"Oh! you don't mean he has been eating human flesh."

"I am sorry to say he has," cried Jack.

This was too much for Mole. Down he flopped on to the ground, and rolled over and over, Nero dancing about him as gracefully as the Highlander doing a caper among the crossed claymores.

"Murder!" yelled Mole, now forgetting his dignity in his fright. "I shall be killed. Somebody come and take him off."

In the midst of this diverting scene, Jack Harkaway the elder appeared at the doorway.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EMILY'S LETTER.

"MR. MOLE!"

"Good gracious me!" said Mr. Mole, jumping up, while his late tormentor bolted away at the sight of Harkaway senior, armed with a stick.

"Why, wherever did you come from, Mr. Mole?" asked Harkaway.

"I have only just reached New York," replied Mr. Mole, panting for breath.

"And your reason for coming?"

"Well, nothing in particular," replied Mr. Mole, smoothing his chin. "The fact is, I—I was taking a little exercise, and I—I stepped over."

"Stepped over!" exclaimed Harkaway, in amazement.

It was rather a long step, you will admit. But Mr. Mole was not a man to stick at trifles, and he fancied that it gave him a rather grand appearance to speak of the journey from Boston to New York as a mere step. Harkaway's first feeling was of anxiety respecting his wife. Was she ill? And his noble heart sank within him at the thought.

"I hope that all is well yonder," he said.

"Yes," returned Mr. Mole. "I am the bearer of a letter for you."

"Where is it?"

"That's just what I was asking myself," replied Mr. Mole, who was feeling in his pockets with great energy.

At length he routed it out, and handed it to Harkaway. He would not have done it had he known its contents, for it was from Emily, and enlightened her husband as to the cause of Mr. Mole's sudden flight.

This is how it ran:

"MY DEAR JACK.—Poor Mr. Mole has been frightened out of his wits. Sunday and Monday have got up a conspiracy and a mock rebellion, and they have played off all kinds of extravagant pranks upon him. The end of it is that he is off

in very undignified haste, never suspecting that I know why he was so anxious to get away. I am not sorry to be rid of his presence for awhile, and I shall join you soon unless I hear from you that you are about to return to us. Write to me by next post, that I may hear if you and our dear boy are well.

EMILY."

"So," said Harkaway, "everyone is well, I hear."

"Oh, yes."

"Nothing wrong at home?"

"No; the real fact is, that there are several reasons for my presence here."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. In the first place, I was getting very anxious about my young pupil."

"Young Jack?"

"Yes."

"Why, anxious?"

"I feared that his education might be getting neglected. These are precious moments that he is losing."

"All right," interrupted Harkaway, shortly. "What was the other reason?"

"What is the—oh, I know. My other reason was that I have a friend staying in Fifth Avenue here."

"Indeed."

"Yes, a relation, in fact; and as I have some expectations from him, I could not afford to neglect him."

"How very singular," said Harkaway, apparently taking it all as gospel. "Now I always understood from you that you hadn't a living relative."

"Quite a mistake," said Mr. Mole. "However, there is no particular urgency in all that. How are you getting along here, eh?"

"Moving, Mr. Mole, moving. Hunston is here, and so is his creature, the brigand Toro."

And then he told Mr. Mole all about their old enemies, and the exciting adventures of the previous night at the "Asteroid."

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"The worst part of Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, subsequently, "is that he will insist upon rushing into all sorts of dangers. It is no doubt very amusing from his point of view, but I looked upon it as an acquired taste; and I shouldn't object to a little peace and quiet."

Poor Mr. Mole!

He little dreamt then that in quitting the country for New York he had popped, in a manner of speaking, out of the frying-pan into the fire.

If he could but have foreseen how unfortunately some of the adventures were to turn out for himself, he would certainly never have left the rebellious negroes even at the risk of being forced into standing upon his head thrice a day.

He naturally preferred standing upon his feet.

Yet he little dreamt that before long he would stand upon his feet for the last time.

This perhaps sounds like a riddle.

Alas! it proved no riddle to him, but a sad reality.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A YOUNG LIFE FADING AWAY.

YOUNG JACK was pleased to get his father in a good humor, for he had a favor to ask him. It related to the two unfortunate orphan boys. Short as the time was that they had been together, a strong affection had already sprung up between them. Jack had saved their lives. Of this there could be no doubt, for if they had not succumbed upon that dreadful night to the bitter pangs of hunger they would have crawled to the river, and with one desperate plunge, have buried their sorrows for evermore beneath the dark waters of the Hudson. Can you wonder, then, that they should feel a deep and earnest affection for their generous young preserver? It is natural, too, to love those whom you have served, and young Jack warmly reciprocated the tenderness which the two orphan lads bore him. Jack could not bear the thought of losing them, so he asked his father to adopt the two boys. He chose his moment well, and pressing his suit hard, carried his point.

"You have been too good to us," Harry Gird-

wood would say to young Jack, "and I only hope that we may be able to repay you for all your kindness."

"I am repaid," young Jack would reply, "by the pleasure it gives me to see you getting better."

The younger of the two brothers, poor boy, had a transparent, waxlike complexion, a dry, hacking cough, and two bright red spots upon his cheeks, which told a sad tale. Originally a delicate lad, want and privation had undermined his frail constitution and sown in him the seeds of that most fatal of all diseases, consumption. Harkaway's first care was to have the best medical advice for him that could be got for money. One of the first physicians of New York saw him, and speedily pronounced his doom.

"Is there any hope for him?" asked Harkaway.

"None."

"Would not a change of climate preserve the poor boy's life?"

The doctor shook his head.

"Nothing could. Care and attention may prolong his life for a month or so, but he is already too far gone. Nothing can save that boy."

"Poor lad," said Harkaway. "Poor boy, it is very dreadful to be doomed so young. His death will lie at Hunston's door—at his and that of his companions in villainy, for the boy's father shot himself after they had ruined him at their gambling house."

* * * * *

Now the hunt after Emmerson grew hotter than ever. But Emmerson was not easily caught. His cunning, and his remarkable cleverness in the art of disguise, served him in good stead, and he contrived to baffle the vigilance of the officers, Daniel Pike and Silkey, for a considerable time. On the very day that they had their information from Saul Garcia, the villain Emmerson had shifted his quarters, and without suspecting the Jew of treachery, thought it prudent to avoid his old haunts.

The three confederates, Hunston, Toro, and Emmerson, for the same reason kept apart for awhile, only meeting in secret places. But the hunt of the detectives grew hotter and hotter. Now while they had such difficulty in getting upon the scent, Emmerson had contrived to post himself up in the movements of Harkaway and his friends. And Emmerson swore that he would help Hunston to hunt down Harkaway and his friends for their share in his discomfiture.

"He's a difficult customer to tackle," said Hunston.

"He is, and I almost begin to think with Toro," said Emmerson.

"What?"

"That there is a charm over Jack Harkaway's life."

"Perhaps so; but there cannot be a charm over his boy's life—that we will have," said Hunston.

"We have tried that on before," said Toro.

"Yes," returned Hunston, uncomfortably, "we have, worse luck. But they can't always be so fortunate."

"It looks like it."

"It does, indeed," said Emmerson, grimly. "But the luck can't always favor them so, and I may as well tell you that I have got a scheme for settling it with this boy—this young Jack."

"What is it?"

"You shall see."

"When?"

"To-night."

"Where?"

"Not a thousand miles from Fifth Avenue," returned Emmerson, significantly. "Come with me, and I promise you a glorious revenge. Such vengeance as you poor haters never dream of."

And then he briefly unfolded to them his diabolical schemes for the destruction of young Jack.

CHAPTER XXV.

THAT same evening, as Harkaway and Dick Harvey were leaving the hotel, an Irishman came up to them with a note.

"Are you Mr. Harkaway, sir?" he asked.

"Yes."

"From Mr. Pike," said the man, presenting his note.

"Pike?" said Harkaway to himself.

He scanned the note half through, and passed it on to Harvey.

"Shall we go?"

"If you like."

It was not a very inviting place that Pike had appointed for the rendezvous.

The Bowery is not the most refined quarter of New York, and the drinking bar to which Mr. Pike invited them was far from being a safe place of resort.

They thought twice, therefore, before setting out.

"Decide," said Harkaway. "Go or stay?"

"Go," said Harvey; "we want to see a little of all sorts while we're here, and I don't know that we could do better than this."

The Irish messenger touched his cap.

"What'll I say, jintlemen?"

"We will go."

"Very good, sir. Can I drink your honor's health?" returned the man, touching his cap respectfully.

"Yes, but stop. Where are you going?"

"Back to Mr. Pike, your honor."

"Direct?"

"Sure I am that same, sirr."

"Then you can show us the way, as we don't know the ground too well."

The Irishman was taken aback at this.

"I have to be back, sirr, in double quick time," he said.

"So you shall," answered Harkaway; "we are going at once; and, understand, you go with us."

The man was in the act of starting off, but, pulling up short, altered his mind.

"No, I had better go with them," he said to himself; "they might not keep the appointment, they are so very downy."

As he said this, he gave a very significant leer. They might not have felt so much inclined to keep Mr. Pike's appointment had they noticed the singular behavior of the Irish messenger. Suddenly the Irish messenger somehow or other got separated from the two gentlemen when near the appointed place. And, as they could not find him, they inquired for the address given in the letter sent by Mr. Pike. But, strangely enough, when they routed out the place, there was no Daniel Pike present.

Nor indeed was the detective known there by either of his names—Pike or Webb.

"We have made a mistake, I think," suggested Harvey.

Harkaway had begun to look very grave by now.

"Either a mistake, or there is something up."

"What do you mean?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Not I."

"What if it is a forgery?"

"The letter?"

"Yes."

Harvey looked blank.

"Is it likely we are sold, Jack?"

"I fear it is," said Harkaway.

They exchanged glances, and although they said nothing, they came to a silent understanding. They knew each other's thoughts well enough upon the subject. If the cheat had been practiced upon them, the authors of it could only be their old enemies. What would they have thought had they seen the Irish messenger enter a low drinking bar, and presently emerge therefrom in a fresh rig-out from top to toe?

It was Robert Emmerson, the English murderer. Soon after this a man presented himself at Harkaway's hotel, asking for Master Harkaway. Young Jack was with his two new friends and companions, and they had just returned from a stroll with Mr. Mole about the town, when a negro waiter brought them the following message from some strange man who had called.

"A big monkey has been found, sir, and they think it is your Nero."

"Where?"

"Close by."

"Have they given the address?"

"No, sir; the man is waiting to take you there if you will go with him."

"Very well."

This was just after the departure of his father and Dick Harvey for the Bowery.

Young Jack had hardly noticed Nero's absence before the message was brought.

"I will go and get him back," he said. "Will you come with me?"

"You had better not go," said young Girdwood.

"Why not?"

"I don't know why," replied the boy, "but I think you had better not."

"But I can't leave Nero."

"Send for him."

"I must go myself. He would never go with anybody but me."

"I'm sorry for that," said Harry Girdwood, with a sigh.

"I shall not be long."

"It is not that," answered the sick boy, nervously, "only I wish you wouldn't go at all."

The two others looked at him earnestly.

"Have you any reason, Hal?" asked his brother Oliver.

"I can't say I have," was the reply, "only I feel low-spirited. I feel as if something very unpleasant was going to happen."

"To whom?"

"To Jack and to me, too," added the boy, seriously.

His brother Oliver looked grave at this.

"Hal's down upon his luck to-day," he said, trying to raise a laugh. "Well, and suppose we don't go?"

"Ah, I wish you wouldn't," said Harry Girdwood, eagerly.

His brother made signs to Jack to follow him out of the room.

"Don't you think that some one could go instead of you, Master Jack?" he asked.

"In the first place," was our young hero's reply, "don't call me Master Jack."

"What then?"

"Jack."

"Well, then, Jack."

"Why shouldn't we go?"

"Because Hal says not. He's full of fancies and he fears that something wrong will happen."

"That," replied young Jack, "is because he is weak and ill; but of course, I don't want him to go if he's afraid."

Oliver Girdwood took him up sharply at this.

"Hal is no coward," he said. "He is no more frightened for himself than I am. He is afraid upon your account, not upon his own."

"No offence, Noll," said young Jack, taking him by the hand. "I did not say that to hurt your feelings."

Oliver Girdwood melted at his young benefactor's generosity.

"I know that well. You are too good, too kind to mean to hurt our feelings."

Now Mr. Mole had been prowling about until he had got tired, and he made up his mind to have a good long rest, and a snooze over his paper and grog, with his boots off. Great, then, was his discomfort when he heard the subject mooted.

"Go out at this time of night?" he said.

"I shan't be long," said young Jack.

"You must not go without me," said his tutor.

"Why not?"

"Your father's orders," said Mr. Mole.

"Dad's afraid of everything about me," replied young Jack. "Anyone would think I was sugar and in danger of melting."

"Besides, you needn't get so fierce, Mr. Mole. I don't want to disobey the governor's orders; everybody seems very sore about stepping out, and I believe that everybody would only be glad if anything would happen to my poor Nero; and he's the only friend I've got to care for me."

"Hush, Jack," said Mr. Mole, reprovingly. "Don't I care for you?"

"Well, yes."

"And our young friends here?"

"Yes."

"Then, what do you mean by saying that Nero—that monkey thing—is the only friend you have got?"

"I only mean, Mr. Mole, that I want to go after Nero."

Now, Mr. Mole, with all his drawbacks, was

really very much attached to his wilful young pupil.

So he gave way and agreed to go in search of the wanderer, Nero. The sick boy made a last effort to dissuade young Jack from going out. But in vain. So, finding him determined, he insisted upon accompanying them.

Now, the place to which the man who had come for them was leading them was close by, in fact, so close as to make a guide quite unnecessary.

"You are afraid of the monkey?" he said to young Jack.

"Afraid? No."

"You seem to want a lot of you, sir, to catch him, though."

"No," answered young Jack; "only they will come with me."

"I wouldn't have them," answered the man, sullenly.

"Why not?" asked young Jack, turning sharply upon him. "Why not? And whatever can it be to you whether I go alone, or whether forty people go with me?"

"Me—oh, nothing," was the reply; "I only spoke. It looks as though you were afraid to go alone."

"Don't talk stuff," replied young Jack. "You'll get paid for your trouble, whoever goes. It will make no difference to you."

The man grumbled surlily something indistinct, and led on.

He came to a halt in front of an empty house, at which he pointed.

"There," said he, "that's where he ran in. tried to get him out, but hang me if I could make him move."

"Because he doesn't know you," suggested Mr. Mole.

"Does he know you?" retorted the man, sharply.

"Yes. That is——"

"Very good. If he does, you'd better go in and look him up. I don't care for the job myself."

"Ahem!"

"Will you go?"

"Why, you see," said Mr. Mole, "I have no fear of the poor monkey, none in the least, but his affection for me is rather too much, and——"

"Of course he does like you," laughed young Jack.

"But I am not the best person to go on a monkey hunt. I might hurt the poor animal, and I would not for worlds."

The man interrupted Mr. Mole with a laugh of derision.

"All right, governor," he said, sneeringly, "you stop here, and I'll go and look up Jacko, and when I chivy him out, you catch him tight and hold him."

"I will," said Mr. Mole, who could not resist the opening of a bit of brag. "If there is one person more calculated than another to hold Nero, or even a wild tiger, it is myself."

"Young Jack could not help laughing at this. He knew that Mr. Mole was in a mortal fright if Nero ever got near him."

The man entered the house, and shortly afterwards a whistle was heard, and a voice cried:

"Now, young master."

"What's that?"

"For me," said young Jack.

He was about to dart forward into the house, when the younger of the Girdwoods stopped him.

"Don't go in there; pray don't."

"Why not?" said Jack. "You can't think the man means me any harm?"

"I fear he means to murder you."

"But how about you three here?"

"How could we prevent harm here if anything happened to you in the house?"

Again the whistle was heard, and the voice of the man crying out:

"Are you coming, young sir, or shall the monkey escape?"

"No fear. They would never try it on while you were all about here."

While they were speaking, Mr. Mole advanced to the door of the empty house, and peered in. Then, as there were no signs of anybody, he ventured up a few stairs. Poor Mole soon got more than he expected. On ordinary occasions he smelt danger half way, and rather more

Now that there was real peril before him, he actually put his head into the lion's jaws.

There was a sudden rush, a low but fiercely muttered oath, and Mr. Mole was dashed in the face and sent flying backwards. So sudden was the assault, and so ferocious, that it sent the luckless tutor over and over, until he lay upon the path, maimed, stunned, and senseless. The three boys were momentarily paralysed with fright. And before they could regain their presence of mind sufficiently to see after poor Mr. Mole, the attack was followed up from the house. Two men darted out and made a rush at Jack, clutching him savagely by each arm.

"Hullo!" cried the startled boy. "What's this? Let go your hold."

"Let go," said the elder Girdwood, stepping bravely forward.

But the two men proceeded to drag young Jack off. One of the men was a perfect giant—one who could never disguise himself effectually on account of his huge bulk, the villain Toro—and young Jack was like a baby in his grasp.

The other—Hunston—held Jack's left arm powerless. And together, it was clear, they meant dragging him into the half-finished house. Young Jack fought hard, and the two Girdwoods fell upon the giant Toro, and fought bravely for Jack. But struggle as they would, what could they do against such brute strength? Toro turned savagely upon Noll Girdwood, and drove fiercely at him with his fist, hurling the brave boy senseless and bleeding to the ground. Young Jack and poor Harry Girdwood alone were left to fight against two such powerful men.

"Ruffians," cried young Jack, "would you murder me?"

Suddenly a diversion was created in their favor in a way they little expected. The innocent cause of all these disasters, Nero, at that moment came dashing along from the hotel, and with a single leap bounded upon Toro's shoulders. Perched up there, he took out a few handfuls of the giant's curly locks. Then, before Toro could retaliate, he transferred his favors to Hunston, whom he clawed down the face. Hunston fought like a madman. But Nero was too much for him. The sagacious monkey knew that these were the enemies of those who were kindest to him, and so he gratefully threw in his help where it was most needed. But Toro, intent only upon dragging young Jack into the empty house, had got him off, and was nearly accomplishing his purpose, when young Harry Girdwood sprang upon him and fought desperately.

"You shall not injure Master Jack!" he cried; "I will kill you first, you monster, or die for good Master Jack."

But his feeble strength could not aid him much. Yet he threatened, by his great activity, to trip the giant up. So, with a muttered curse upon his lips, Toro pinned young Jack to the wall, and held him powerless, squeezing the very life slowly out of the hapless boy. With the other he tried to fix upon Harry Girdwood in the same way.

But tried in vain. The boy was slippery as an eel, and when Toro was nearly fixing him, poor Harry seized the giant's wrist in his teeth, and bit it through. Toro jerked the poor lad backwards and forwards to free his hand from the teeth of Harry, and then at last threw him heavily to the ground. Then, seizing his ever ready knife, he struck savagely twice at the boy, and he fell, bathed in blood.

"Help, help!" he murmured, faintly; "help for Master Jack!"

Then his senses fled.

"Now you're mine," said Toro, with a savage laugh of triumph, and he dragged off Jack into the house.

This probably saved Hunston's eyesight. Nero's purpose was clearly enough to tear out his enemy's eyes, and Hunston's one arm was scarcely able to guard them from the nimble foe. Nero no sooner saw his young master going off, than, giving Hunston one more scratch, he jumped after them into the house.

"Hunston—Hunston, this way!" called the giant.

"I'm here," cried his comrade in villainy from the foot of the stairs.

"Shut the door."

"I'll see to that."

He bolted it, too, to guard against interruption. Poor Jack! it would go very hard with him now.

"What do you want with me?" asked young Jack, boldly.

The giant replied by knocking him down with his fist.

"What do we want? Why, we're going to kill you," he said, deliberately; "to kill you slowly, and to let your father know it, so that he may suffer as much in mind as you shall in body."

The boy stood up again defiantly before his captors.

"You may kill me," he said, "because you are stronger, but keep out of my father's way henceforth, for no death that he could invent would be horrible enough for you."

"Silence, cub!"

And the brutal Toro dashed his fist into the boy's face again, hurling him to the ground.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Two gentlemen were walking along in the vicinity of Fifth Avenue, when they heard loud cries proceeding from close at hand.

"There's some one in danger, I think," said one of them.

"I heard a cry."

"Which way did it sound?"

"It sounded here to the right."

"Let us listen again."

"Hark!"

"Come along, Jeff, this way," said the dwarf, for it was indeed those two adventurous gentlemen.

They hurried along, guided by the cries of the poor, wounded people, and in two or three minutes came upon the fatal scene. There lay poor Mole, writhing on the ground in the most horrible suffering. The boy Oliver Girdwood was still insensible. But alas for poor Harry Girdwood! His life blood was ebbing fast from two ghastly wounds in the chest and side.

"Poor boy," said the big Kentuckian, kneeling over the young sufferer. "Poor little fellow."

Harry Girdwood opened his eyes and moaned faintly.

"Poor lad," groaned the Kentuckian, who was a very glutton at taking punishment himself, and yet was ready to show his heart by weeping over the poor little fellow's sufferings. "Who has done this?"

Harry Girdwood struggled vainly to speak at first.

Then, after a moment's pause, he gasped:

"I think it must be some of Emmerson's men—"

"Emmerson's men?"

"Yes."

And the poor boy lay heavy in the big man's arms. They could scarcely believe that they heard right.

"They rushed out on us and tore Jack Harkaway away," continued Harry.

"Who?—what? Jack Harkaway, did you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"The elder?"

"No, the son."

"Where to? Tell me—tell me, quick, my poor, poor boy!"

"In that empty house."

And then again, overcome by weakness, the unfortunate boy fainted.

"What shall we do with this poor child and the others?" exclaimed Jefferson, looking about him in sore perplexity.

"Leave us here," groaned poor Mr. Mole. "See after my boy—my Jack."

They turned eagerly to Mole for information.

"He's in the house?"

"Yes."

Mr. Jefferson, the brave American, waited for no more, but made a dash at the door. It was fast. So fast, in fact, that it would require something more than mere strength to move.

"Darn you, go open!" ejaculated Jefferson.

He literally hurled himself against it.

But although the shock shook the whole house, the door stood firm.

"Try, try, once again," urged Mole, between his

groans. "I shall never dare face his mother. Oh, try to save young Jack!"

The doughty Kentuckian needed no urging. He was performing prodigies as it was. But that kind-hearted giant, who was ready to cry over the wounded boy, was an ugly customer when he lost his temper. He had lost it. Woe be to Hunston if he should get at him now! Woe be to Toro if they should meet while this rage was on him!

The baffled Kentuckian, in sheer vexation, dashed at the upper panel of the door, and actually splintered it with one blow of his fist.

"Stand out of the way, Jefferson," said his little friend.

"Why?"

"I can do it."

"You?"

"Yes; see here."

"He produced a six-shooter from his pocket.

It had been his constant companion since the battle at the "Asteroid."

"It is not bolted, I can see; it is only the lock."

Saying which, he inserted the muzzle of the pistol in the keyhole, and drew the trigger. A loud explosion followed, and the door flew open.

"Well done. This way!" cried Jefferson, dashing before him.

Up the stairs he flew, followed by the dwarf, and dashed open the first door he came to.

No signs of Jack or of Nero.

"Not here."

"Stop a bit," said the dwarf, rushing in; "I can hear a noise up stairs. They're trying the roof."

* * * * *

Poor Jack had suffered severely in the meanwhile. All kinds of small torture which the invention of the cowardly ruffians could suggest were gone into with the cruellest deliberation. But they had not time to accomplish their diabolical designs, happily for young Jack. When matters were growing desperate, a pistol-shot was heard below. It sounded in the house. Of this there could be no doubt.

"What was that?" said Hunston.

"It was plain enough," replied Toro; "some one firing below."

"They have got in the house."

"What then?"

"It is time for us to get out of the house."

"Bah!"

"Come," said Hunston, seriously, "no foolhardiness, Toro," with a sneer; "no one prevents you—only leave me to do as I like; and I like to stop here and face the man that dares to meet me."

Steps were heard upon the stairs. The moments grew precious now, for in two minutes more it would be too late.

"Do you know what vengeance is?" said Hunston.

The ex-brigand replied by a fierce oath.

"Do I know what vengeance is?" he ejaculated.

"I have tasted its sweets, and I live only to taste them again. I'll have an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, from this hated Harkaway crew—one and all! and I'll begin with—"

"Hark!"

A crash at the adjoining room door.

"It will be too late presently," whispered Hunston, hoarsely.

"Go, then, and leave me," said the brigand.

Just then they could hear the splintering of wood and a heavy tramping of feet to and fro, and a burly voice crying out in angry tones:

"Not here! I'll have the floor up and the walls down brick by brick, but what I'll find him."

Hunston and Toro once more exchanged glances. The latter changed color. The giant brigand recognized Jefferson's voice. Once only in the whole course of his life had he found a man with whom, on the score of sheer brute strength alone, he feared to cope. This was Jefferson, the American.

And there he was in the house—on the track—in hot pursuit. Hunston noticed the change in Toro at once. Passing their lives together, they became so accustomed to each other, that they understood what was passing in each other's mind without a word being spoken to put them upon the scent.

"Come, Toro," he said, "there is yet time to escape."

The giant appeared to be convinced by the arguments of his companion.

"I'll go," he said, "but only on your promise of early vengeance."

"Count upon it."

"I do."

"This way, then. Quick!"

And then, having bound and gagged young Jack, they flew out by a further door, and made for the roof. At that very moment, Jefferson and the dwarf burst into the room. The dwarf bounded up to young Jack, and with a single stroke of a knife, severed the rope which bound him.

Then the gag was hastily removed from the poor boy's mouth.

"Where have they gone?" were Jefferson's first words.

"That way," gasped young Jack, who was well-nigh exhausted, pointing to the door by which they had escaped.

"They shall not escape!" cried Jefferson, darting off.

The dwarf would have followed, but his friend persuaded him to remain.

"Stay and look after young Jack," he said; "they might return. Be prepared."

"Woe betide them if they do," said the dwarf, reproducing his revolver, which had already rendered them such signal service.

Jefferson rushed off in pursuit, but ere he had got far, stopped short.

He heard footsteps on the stairs below.

They had contrived to conceal themselves, perhaps, and doubled on their pursuers.

No sooner had this thought crossed Jefferson, than back he rushed and made for the stairs, before he could even reach the door, it was dashed open, and Harkaway appeared.

"Mr. Jefferson!" ejaculated Harkaway.

"All right!" cried the Kentuckian, seizing Harkaway's hand and giving it a hurried shake. "I am glad to see you here."

Harkaway was closely followed by Dick Harvey and a whole mob of policemen and volunteers. By this time a great crowd had been drawn to the spot, partly attracted thither by the cries of the poor unfortunates below, but more especially by the alarming pistol shot by which the lock had been blown off.

"Are they being cared for below?" demanded the big American.

"Yes, our servants are with them."

"Then let the house be surrounded. Let every outlet be guarded," cried Jefferson, excitedly; "for I'd rather lose a thousand dollars than fail to bag those murdering ruffians. Would I had once more that giant brigand in my grip!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

HUNSTON and Toro were too cunning for their pursuers. The house was ransacked, and every visible outlet guarded. But all in vain.

They could get no trace of them. How the ruffians had escaped the vigilance of such eager pursuers was no easy matter to guess. They must surely have possessed some hiding-place which baffled the scrutiny of the searchers. In this way alone could they account for their mysterious disappearance.

When Harkaway and his party returned with the happily-rescued young Jack, the maimed tutor and the two Girdwood boys were already being tended. And by whom? Who but the brace of faithful darkies—Messieurs Sunday and Monday? The protracted stay of Jack Harkaway senior and junior and Dick Harvey had induced the whole family to migrate suddenly, and without previously writing, to New York. They reached here at a very sad time. It might have been much worse, it is true, but for the proverbial good luck of the Harkaways, which had once more stood the son and heir of the house in good stead. For the other members of the party it was bad indeed, as you will see. Oliver Girdwood had come to no particular harm. A few bruises and a severe shaking, but no bones broken. With his young brother Harry matters were worse. A litter was procured, and he was borne tenderly and carefully to the hotel.

But alas! all the tenderness they could bestow, all the care they gave him, could avail him nothing.

The poor boy's hours in this world were numbered.

This was so apparent that they scarcely needed the doctor's confirmation of their fears. As for poor Mr. Mole, his groans were heartrending when they attempted to move him, and it was evident that he had sustained some very serious hurt. The fact was that, knowing the worthy tutor to be possessed of no very great courage, they were not inclined to believe him to be as gravely injured as he was, and they were one and all inexpressibly shocked to learn that one of his legs was so cruelly maimed as to render amputation necessary. The last moments of Harry Girdwood, the poor little orphan boy, were at hand. His new-found friends were gathered around the poor boy's bed—new-found friends so soon to be lost—in silent sorrow. Grief was in every face. His brother and young Jack stood upon either side of his bed, each tenderly clasping a hand, as though they thought thus to hold him back from the grave which was so soon to claim him.

"Don't fret after me, Noll," said the poor boy, with a faint smile at his brother.

The latter could not reply.

He essayed to speak.

But in vain.

The huge lump rose higher and higher in his throat, and threatened to choke him.

Harry gazed sadly at his grief-stricken brother for a moment, and then he turned to young Jack.

"You'll be his brother," he said, "now that I am going—won't you, dear Jack?"

"I will, I will," answered Jack, gulping down a sob that he could not repress.

"And you, Mr. Harkaway," added the dying boy, appealing to Jack's father, who was sorrowfully gazing down upon him.

"What, my child?" said Harkaway, tenderly.

"You'll not forget poor Noll?"

"Never."

"You'll not forget that his brother died in trying to save dear Jack?"

"Forget?" murmured Harkaway, covering his face with his hands. "Can I ever forget? Heaven help you, poor boy!"

It needed not the dying boy's appeal to remind him all this trouble had been brought about by his enemies in their hunger for vengeance upon him.

"There, Noll," said the sufferer, pressing his brother's hand gently, "there, you see it's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

He smiled faintly as he said this.

But the elder Girdwood could not catch his meaning, and some suspicion crossed him that his brother was wandering a little in his mind.

"What do you say, Harry, dear?" he asked, gently.

"I say it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. I am carried off, a useless, sickly fellow, no good to anybody."

"Oh, Harry!"

"It's true, and you get young Jack for a brother. You profit by the exchange, Noll, and Jack gets a brother like few fellows have, and—and—I'm quite content to leave this world."

His concluding words were full of meaning. He was quite resigned to his fate. He was quite content to die—nay, he was more than content; the prospect of death to him was as welcome as sleep after a laborious day. His life had known more sorrows than sweets, more tears than smiles, and he looked forward to his rest with feelings akin to pleasure. The one great sorrow was the separation from his brother. The severe struggles for bread, the hardships they had undergone together, endeared them to each other with more than an ordinary brotherly affection.

"It might have been worse," pursued the poor boy, looking up at Harkaway; "if I had not been sacrificed, they might have done as much for young Jack. He has a bright future before him, whereas I might have dragged on miserably for some time, and died in great suffering."

"Do you feel any pain now?"

"None."

He closed his eyes as he said this, overcome with weakness. His strength was ebbing fast now, and this exertion of sustaining a conversation was almost too much for him. As he lay there,

with closed eyes, he sighed and murmured the name of "mother" gently, and then lay so still that that they thought the end was coming.

So calm, so placid he looked, that even the doctor thought so too, and, with his finger on his lips, he motioned them to silence. In that dread moment the spectators of this harrowing scene held their breaths, fearful of disturbing the last moments of the fast dying boy, and in the awesome silence the ticking of the clock on the chimney-piece sounded louder and louder.

The two boys, still holding his hands, ever afterwards remembered this dread hour, and never heard the ticking of a clock, but they likened it in their fancy to poor Harry Girdwood's death knell. And while they were watching thus in sad expectation, the door was gently opened, and two men stepped noiselessly into the room. One was Daniel Pike. The other was his comrade Nabley, or Percival, just recovered. Oliver Girdwood looked up and gave them a nod of recognition.

"Come here, Mr. Nabley," he said in a whisper.

The detective stepped reverently to the boy's side.

"You have known what it is to lose a brother," said Oliver Girdwood.

"I have," replied the detective, with a sigh; "a murdered brother."

"Remember this scene, then," he added, in low but impressive tones "and help me in what it must be the purpose of my life to accomplish."

"I will."

The dying boy opened his eyes.

"Let vengeance alone, Noll," he said, gently but earnestly; "leave it to justice, and surer hands than yours or any mortal's. 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord."

Oliver Girdwood hung his head before his dying brother's rebuke.

A change came over the boy's face, and his voice grew weaker and weaker.

"Kiss me, Noll," he said faintly, "kiss me. I fancy, Noll dear, I can hear our dear mother's voice calling me. Good-bye; good-bye, Jack dear. God bless you all!"

His lips moved slightly after this, and seemed to form the word "mother," but no sound came. A gentle sigh, and all was over. Poor Harry Girdwood's troubles were ended.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE murdered boy was scarcely in his grave before the thirst for vengeance came back in full force upon Noll. He could not forget how his poor, weak brother had been struck cruelly down by the brigand Toro.

Day and night, it was in the boy's thoughts.

Sometimes he would struggle against it.

But all in vain.

The thought of his poor brother's cruel murder goaded him to fury, and he made a deep vow of vengeance.

Once the oath taken, he regarded it as his duty to devote his whole life to the task.

"Yes," he said, and the big tears rolled down his face; "I will track the murderer of my brother even if it costs me my own life!"

How he fulfilled that vow you will learn as you read on.

* * * * *

But now we must return to the worthy Isaac Mole. His leg was broken in the fall—nothing could save it. All that skill could do was done, every care and attention that money could procure were of course seen to by his friends.

All to no use. To do Mr. Mole full justice, he learnt the unpleasant truth with far more self-possession than you would have anticipated. During his illness, he was nursed with untiring care by a young negress, to whom the patient grew greatly attached. And after the painful operation of having his broken leg taken off, he could not resist the opportunity of throwing the hatchet, even when down on his back on a bed of sickness, and the young negress believed implicitly in his romancing. The consequence was that she regarded Mr. Mole as an Admirable Crichton. Mole, upon his side, looked upon his nurse as a ministering angel, and he did not scruple to tell her as much.

"When I am back in my country, Chloe," said

the tutor, "I shall give you some solid proof of my gratitude."

"Oh, sar," the dark Venus would exclaim, quite overwhelmed with his magnanimity; "you bery much too good to poor black gal."

"Not a bit, Chloe," said the patient, with fervor, "for you are an angel."

"Massa Mole, Massa Mole!" exclaimed the nurse, laughing, "why, angels are all bery lily snow white. I seen lots of pictures of dem beautiful gals, and dem little boys' heads, dat look as if de wings had carried 'em off de little fellars' bodies cause dey too heavy."

"No, Chloe," said Mr. Mole. "No, when I call you an angel, that is a mere figure."

"What dat, Massa Mole?"

"A figure? A figure of speech, you understand."

But it was very evident that she did not understand.

"My figger?" she said, with a half puzzled air. "How you poke fun at a poor gal ob color, Massa Mole."

At this the invalid made a very vigorous protest.

"Never, Chloe, never; I swear it. I should be the most ungrateful villain alive. Why, you have saved my life by your careful nursing, bless you, Chloe!"

This made the sensitive negress weep.

"Come, come, Chloe, my girl," said Mr. Mole, in great distress, "I don't mean to hurt your feelings; I want, on the contrary, to express my gratitude."

"Oh, sar."

"In fact, Chloe, I intend doing something very handsome indeed for you. I may tell you that, in my own country, I am certainly not King of England, but I am a man of consideration."

"A bery great grand gentleman, I s'pose," said the girl.

"Yes, I am so; in fact, very little is done in my country without my consent," returned the invalid, modestly; "but I leave people to say what they like of me."

"You bery fine handsome man, Massa Mole," said the girl.

"You are a young woman of undoubted taste," said the tutor.

"Glad you tink so, Massa Mole."

"I know so," rejoined Mr. Mole, emphatically; "and let me tell you, Chloe, that at any time you express a wish or ask me a favor, it shall be law."

"You bery much too good, sar, to poor nigger gal."

"Not a bit. Once let me move about the world again, even though on a wooden leg instead of flesh and bone, and you shall see. Come when you will, Chloe," he said, with an air of solemn majesty, which inspired the nurse with awe, "come when you will—ask what you will; if in my power it shall be granted. You hear me, for I have given my kingly word?"

"Yes, sar."

"And you thoroughly understand me?"

"Yes, sar."

"Then bear in mind, any favor you ask shall be granted."

The dusky nurse sat upon the foot of the bed, surveying her patient with undisguised admiration.

"Massa Mole," she said presently, in a tender voice.

"Yes."

"I have something to show you."

"Have you, my good nurse? What is it?"

"Would you like to see the new one now?"

"What new one, Chloe?" asked Mr. Mole, innocently.

"Got something bery handsome."

"What is it?"

"It am like a beautiful leg of a table."

"A leg of a table!" said Mole, looking hard at Chloe.

"Yes; de new leg dey bring you, Massa Mole."

He made a wry face at this. It was a sad reminder for poor Mole.

"I suppose I must make up my mind to like it. Bring in my timber—ugh!"

According to Chloe's notions, it was rather an ornament to the human form, so she had had it gaudily colored, with bright green and white in stripes, until it reminded you of one of those rods

which land surveyors put to some mysterious use.

"Everyone take you for a great warrior, sar. Dey tink you lose your leg in battle."

"They'll know one thing, Chloe," said Mr. Mole, with a grim smile.

"What dat, Massa Mole?"

"Why, that while I've got that leg to stand upon, I shall never desert my colors."

"Course not."

She looked quite seriously.

"Colors, don't you see, Chloe," said he. "Color's—eh?"

"Yes, sar."

"A joke, Chloe."

But she could not see any joke in this, so the waggish invalid was forced to abandon the attempt. At length Mr. Mole was sufficiently strong to venture out in all the glory of a spick and span new wooden leg. His nurse regarded the painted wooden lump with a certain pride. Consequently she was not a little disappointed when her patients showed a desire to cover it up with the trouser-leg. So she exerted her eloquence to dissuade him, and used as her chief argument the probability of his being looked upon as a veteran warrior.

"They would not be far out, my good Chloe," said Mr. Mole, with a touch of pride, "if they did take me for a warrior."

"Of course not, Massa Mole."

"I have done my share of fighting, I can tell you."

Chloe opened her mouth—it was a good size—to its fullest extent.

"You fight, sar?"

"Yes, Chloe."

"You eber a sojer, sar?"

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "not to say a downright soldier, Chloe, because a soldier might be a mere private. No, I have led brave men to battle, Chloe; I have had kings for my companions, and I have fought and bled with them for days together."

He drew himself up to his full height as he said this. At first our friend Mole made but slow progress.

"It is for all the world like walking upon stilts," said Mr. Mole, "and if any young lady was to ask me to waltz, I really think I should decline that pleasure, for fear of treading on her toes."

However, he soon found that it was not necessary to be born an acrobat to preserve his equilibrium upon a wooden leg. Chloe accompanied him in his walks abroad at first, until he grew strong and confident in himself; and during those walks Mr. Mole told such wonders, related such astounding scenes of which he was the hero, that she would have thought him a combination of Cæsar, Mungo Park, Hannibal, Robinson Crusoe, and the late Wizard of the North.

And so, in Yankee phraseology, he "piled it on thick," and, what's more, he believed it all himself.

"Do you know, Chloe," he said one day, "you are a very remarkably shrewd girl, and—and it's a pity you are so dark in your complexion."

"Poor nigger," sighed the young nurse.

"Nigger or no nigger," said the tutor, magnanimously, "your heart is whiter than the fairest lady's in the land."

"Lawks! Massa Mole."

"And I shall have to do something very handsome for you."

"I don't want nuffin'."

"I suppose not," said Mr. Mole, "but you will have to be rewarded for your goodness, and you must think it over. A man with all the cares and troubles on his mind that I have, can't always think even. And mark my words, Chloe—are you listening?"

"Yes, sar."

"You must think for yourself what form the reward shall take. Whatever it is, it shall be granted; you have the word of the great Isaac Mole." The negress stared again and grinned with pleasure. Meanwhile the king's promise of the worthy tutor sank deeply into the colored girl's mind. She obeyed her patient. She did think it over. And when she claimed her reward, the fulfilment of his promise caused Mr. Mole very considerable embarrassment. What she claimed, you will see in good time.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Mr. MOLE was getting very white about the hair for a long while past, and since he had been in America he had lost his leaden comb with which he was wont to tiddivate his whiskers.

"Ha!" said Mr. Mole, "I am losing my youthful looks. I am afraid I am getting very gray. What shall I do with my whiskers? I certainly must improve them."

"I could dye them for you," said a voice behind Mole.

"You could, Jack?"

"Beautifully."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course," replied his pupil. "Do you want to see a specimen?"

"Well, Jack," answered the tutor, "I certainly should—not that I doubt your skill, but—"

He paused.

"But what, sir?"

"You are, I fear, rather given to practical joking."

"Me, sir?" said innocent Jack, looking de-mure.

"Yes, Jack, you have inherited that reprehensible weakness, I fear, from your father. But could you really improve my appearance?"

"It would give me great pleasure, sir."

"You really think that you could do it for me, Jack?"

Jack smiled.

"Do it, Mr. Mole? Why, of course I can."

"Well, you shall try."

Mr. Mole sat himself down on a chair as he spoke.

"But have you got the dye handy, Jack?"

"Oh, yes, sir; in one moment."

Young Jack soon got his dye and appliances ready, and he set to work.

"I think a good chestnut brown, Mr. Mole, is as good a color as a young man of your age could choose. What do you say, sir?"

"Brown is a good color," said Mole.

"Yes."

"What do you think of black—a raven black?"

"It has got such a 'dyed' look, sir."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes. You look at these old beaux who want to make themselves look juvenile by dyeing; they always choose raven black, as you call it, and what do they look like?"

"Can't say."

"Can't you?" said young Jack. "Then I can. They look for all the world like barber's dummies."

"Then you say brown?"

"Yes."

"My dear Jack, turn my hair a brown color, but let it be rich and glossy."

"Very well, Mr. Mole. Brown be it."

Jack set to work, and in a remarkably brief space of time, one whisker was completed.

"That's done, sir."

"Let me see it."

Jack rang for a hand glass, and Sunday appeared with it.

"Oh, Massa Mole," said Sunday, "dat one whisker look magnificent."

Mole frowned.

"Sunday," he said, with dignity, "I don't want your criticism upon my personal appearance."

"Why not, sar?"

"Because I can dispense with your taste, or that of any nigger."

Sunday drew himself up and expanded his chest.

"Niggar, Massa Mole?"

"Yes, nigger."

"Am not a niggar a man and a bruder?"

"In a certain—only a certain sense—a very limited sense."

Sunday scratched his wool at this.

"Am dis child in de limited sense, Massa Mole?" he asked. "Am not dis chile de brudder ob Massa Mole?"

The latter made a grimace.

"Not exactly," he said.

"Why not, sar?"

"Because you are an ignorant nigger, a black doll, such as they hang outside the ragshops in

my country, and because I am a gentleman, you ebony effigy."

"Don't call names, Massa Mole," said Sunday. "You one day glad to call me brudder, perhaps."

"What?"

"Jes' you tink of what dis nigger tell you, Massa Mole."

"You are cracked, you Snowball," said the tutor, who, was in high spirits to-day. "Get out," and Mole took up a boot, and threw it at the head of Sunday, who popped out just in time to save himself. Soon after, Sunday again came in, saying:

"All right, Massa Mole, all right. I got to take de glass away, Massa Jack."

He grinned at young Jack behind the tutor, and the mischievous Jack nodded in a way to show that he quite understood it all.

There was something wrong in all this.

What could it be?

"Get out, you imp of darkness," said Mr. Mole, getting gayer and younger with the thoughts of banishing his gray hairs.

"You a imp yourself, Massa Mole," said the indignant Sunday.

And he left the room singing. Mr. Mole heard it, but at first he did not pay any attention to the strain. He caught a few of the words the next minute, and then he remembered it but too well.

These were the words:

"Mister Mole

Was a swipecy soul,

And a swipecy soul was he,

Never caring for prog,

He called for his grog,

And he never care nuffin' for tea."

"Get out, you scoundrel!" cried Mr. Mole.

He stumped after Sunday's retreating figure to the door, but the negro was out of reach, and laughing derisively at poor Mole.

He turned to young Jack, who was laughing heartily.

"He's a most insolent nigger, Jack," said Mole.

"Yes, sir."

Jack thought it best to agree with his tutor upon this point.

"Ignorant as he is ugly," added Mr. Mole.

"Yes."

"Wanting in respect to his superiors."

"He is, he is," said Jack; "badly wanting in respect."

"Not but what we are all weak and frail," said Mr. Mole.

"Not all," said Jack.

"Yea, all," said Mr. Mole; "I affirm all. We are but poor worms—"

"Worms!" exclaimed young Jack. "How nasty."

"All mere bipeds," groaned Mr. Mole, working himself up into a fit of religious fervor, in his anxiety to do justice to his pupil.

"Not all."

"Yea, all."

"Not all, I say. What is the definition of Biped?"

"Biped is a two-legged animal," replied Mr. Mole.

"Then you are not a biped," said young Jack, pointing to Mr. Mole's timber toe.

"Ahem!" coughed the tutor; "proceed from where we were interrupted by that ignorant nigger."

Mr. Mole was so thoroughly satisfied with his first whisker which had been dyed, and he had seen in the hand glass, that he trusted himself implicitly now to the hands of his pupil for the rest.

Alas for Mr. Mole! young Jack meant mischief, and he artfully changed the dye pots when the tutor's back was turned, and set to work vigorously upon the other whisker and his scant gray hairs. A few moments after Mr. Mole looked rather a singular sight for a dinner party. One whisker was a glossy brown. The other was a bright blue. And his gray hair was dyed a fiery red.

"Is it done? Have you quite finished, my dear Jack?"

"Yes, sir," said his pupil, hardly able to contain himself.

"And it looks well?"

"Beautiful."

"Where is the looking-glass, Jack?"

"Sunday has taken it away."

"Ring for it."

Jack obeyed, but when Sunday appeared, it was only to say he had returned the glass to its owner, and that there was not another hand-glass disengaged in the house.

Just then a servant came to tell them that the assembled company was calling for Mr. Mole, and anxious to begin the banquet.

"No matter, I look well and young, I hope," said Mr. Mole; "is of no consequence. Come, Jack."

"Yes, sir."

So Mr. Mole, conscious of his own commanding figure and personal attractions, strode majestically on.

His step, now more than ever, reminded Jack of his early lessons in arithmetic, and as the door was thrown open by one of the negroes, young Jack announced him from the rear.

"Dot and carry one."

Nero was in the room, and as soon as he heard the voice of his young master, he walked on before Mr. Mole on his hands.

The only thing which disturbed the majestic movements of the procession was the mutilation which Nero's tail occasioned when coming in contact with Mole's rubicund nose. As they entered, there was a start, a stare of wonder and amazement. For Mr. Mole, with one whisker dyed brown, the other sky blue, and his bright red head of hair, looked a very comic figure. The next moment the company generally burst into a loud laughter.

CHAPTER XXX.

We must wander from the fashionable precincts of Fifth Avenue to the less salubrious quarter of New York called the Bowery. In a dark and gully black slum there were a number of men assembled, men as dark and ugly as the slum itself.

With these men we have to deal. Their meeting house was a cellar that somehow or other escaped the vigilance of the police. The master spirit of these scamps was an Englishman, known as Protean Bob.

These men who now skulked in a cellar, and dared not show up above the surface of the earth in daylight had not long before been proprietors of a magnificent swindle. But that one dark night's work at the "Asteroid" had made them marked men. The police were on their track. It was only a question of time, when and where they were to be taken.

Their money and present resources were nearly exhausted, and it was very sure that in a very little time indeed they would feel the pangs of hunger.

They endeavored to keep up their spirits, however, by sundry devices, gambling being their chief occupation as a rule. The gang at this time had begun to feel the unpleasantness of their position, and they had grown desperate.

"Have a little patience," said Emmerson; "there's no object in going out yet. Let a few days go by; let the excitement soften down. There is nothing dies away so soon as the ardor of the police."

"But these are not ordinary police," said Hunston. "They have a private grudge against us, as well, to help them to keep to their purpose."

"Curse them!"

"And as for the Harkaway crew, it is not likely that they will forget; they haunt us like our shadows."

"I tell you what," said Toro, savagely, "if I stay here much longer, I shall go mad; I can't endure confinement."

"Stuff!"

"I tell you I would sooner be dead, hung, shot—anything, sooner than be stived up here."

"There's a good chance of that," said Emmerson, significantly.

"Of what?"

"Hanging."

The burly brigand changed color. In spite of his boast, the thought of hanging made him quail. It was not death, for he had faced death in many ways, and with all his infamous qualities he was a brave man.

It was only the manner of death that filled him with fear. "I'll thank you, Emmerson," he said, sternly, "not to joke with me."

"I don't joke."

"What do you mean, then? There's no such thing as hanging for gambling, or anything short of—of—"

"Murder?"

"Yes."

"Of course not."

"Well, then?"

"Well, then, what if I told you that the boy Girdwood is dead, that warrants are out, and a heavy reward offered by Harkaway; so large a reward that the whole of the New York force is on its mettle?"

"Ugh!"

"The halter is as good as round your neck; it is only a question of days. Follow my advice, and I may yet save you."

"I will."

"Lie snug here, let the noise blow over a bit, and—who knows?—they may begin to think that we had got away before the hue and cry was raised, and are now at San Francisco, or New Orleans, or goodness knows where."

"But, in the meantime, what are we to do?"

"For what?"

"Food."

"Leave it to me."

He had a scheme of his own in his head, but wanted to put its efficacy to a great test, as you will see.

Later in the day there was a knock at the door, that threw them all into a momentary excitement.

Hunston turned to his companions.

"Shall I let him in?"

"Yes."

"Is it prudent?"

"There can be no harm; such a poor old worm."

The door was unbarred, and opened just sufficiently wide to let the old man squeeze in.

Then it was immediately shut and carefully barred.

The old man was white-haired, and bent nearly double with age and infirmity.

"Now, then," said Hunston, "what is your message?"

"Wait a bit, young man, until I've got my wind."

"Hang your wind; say what 'you've got to say and get off, will you?"

But never was there a more aggravating old man. He puffed and blowed, and blowed and puffed, and grunted with rheumatic pains until they were, one and all of them, goaded to fury.

"Who is your message from?" demanded Toro.

"From Mr.—but there's no one here you mind me speaking before?" he asked, looking about him suspiciously.

"No, no."

"All friends here?"

"Yes."

"Then I am sent here by Mr. Emmerson."

"Emmerson! Why, he is here."

"It's odd to me if he is," returned the old man. "Ugh, my back!"

They looked about for Emmerson.

But surely enough he was absent.

This astonished them all the more inasmuch as their present hiding-place was anything but spacious.

How Emmerson had contrived to slip out unobserved, was rather a puzzle.

"I left him at the corner of the street yonder," said the old man.

"Why didn't he come himself?" asked Hunston, suspiciously.

"Because he was watched by two men."

"Did he say who the two men were?"

"Pike and Nabley, the English detectives."

"Confusion!"

"It is all up with us."

"Curse his venturesome spirit!" said Hunston. "Emmerson has ruined us. It strikes me we're caged here."

"Like so many rats in a trap," said the giant Toro, with an oath.

"Softly, softly," said the old man; "while you are blaming him for imprudence, think of your own conduct."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, in the first place, in letting me in."

"You've brought a message from Emmerson."

"You've only my word for it," said the old man, sharply.

"But you don't mean to tell us—"

"That it is false—yes, I do—and what if I told you that, instead of being the old man, I appeared to be, I am Daniel Pike the detective?"

Saying which, he jumped back, tossed off his broad-brimmed hat and snowy locks, and presented two pistols at the astounded man.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"PIKE!" The gang was taken by surprise. So judiciously was his place taken, that the sham old man covered all with his pistols.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed; "you are a pretty set of fellows, 'pon my life, all of you taken by surprise by a feeble old man. Now, I'll show you that I'm more than a match for you, even without my barkers."

Saying which he threw down his pistols and folded his arms.

This looked like a very imprudent move indeed. In a moment they ran in upon him and held him powerless. Instead of fighting for freedom—nay, instead of manifesting the slightest alarm at what had taken place, the sham old man burst into a boisterous fit of laughter.

"You shall suffer for this, my friend," said Hunston.

"Shall I?"

"Indeed you shall."

"And who will—stop," he added, pulling himself up short; "I'll wager you ten dollars that I get out of this with a whole skin, and make you all heartily ashamed that I've had all the laugh to myself, in spite of you."

Suddenly he jerked himself free of his captors, and whipped ten dollars in silver from his pocket.

"There's my money down," he said. "Are you afraid to bet me, all of you? What, the intrepid Toro, the daring Toro, afraid to bet ten dollars, when the odds are ten to one in his favor, and I offer to bet level? The brave Toro. Oh, oh, oh!"

Now, the ex-brigand was so much surprised by the fellow's audacious taunts, that he blurted out his acceptance of the challenge to bet.

"You do? Very good, then; see here," said the sham old man.

And at this he took off his mutton-chop whiskers and horsey cravat, with which he had contrived to disguise himself as Daniel Pike. And then, this very slight change effected, he stood before them, as large as life, as Protean Bob.

Yes it was indeed so, the notorious Robert Emmerson himself.

They stared at him in a half frightened way, silent, stupid, gaping.

Wonder, amazement, fear, curiosity, were all blended in their faces.

"Emmerson!" ejaculated one, whose amazement overcame him. "Is it possible?"

"Yes, it is."

"Hang it all, he has won," cried Hunston.

"Where are your ten dollars, Toro?" asked Emmerson.

Toro growled out something in a very ungracious spirit, something to the effect that he did not care to be made a fool of.

"It would take a cleverer man than Robert Emmerson," said Protean Bob, with a laugh, "to make a fool of you. Toro, you're such a precious blockhead already."

At this they laughed so boisterously that the peppery Italian was goaded to boiling heat. But they all felt anxious to know how Emmerson had got out unobserved.

"You were nearly all asleep," said Emmerson.

"Yes, granted," said Hunston, "but I don't quite see how you got hold of your rig-out."

"Easily enough, I have plenty of friends."

"But was it not dangerous to let them know where you were?"

"I did not tell them where I was hiding."

"That's right."

"I'm not quite a fool."

"But you haven't told us," said Hunston, "where and how you got hold of your rig-out."

"Easily enough, You know Saul?"

"Isn't it precious dangerous to go there?"

"Deuce a bit."

"I wouldn't trust Saul Garcia, nor any man."

Emmerson laughed at their fears.

"I'd sooner trust Garcia than any man I know," he said, "Garcia is bound to me by something stronger than love or self-interest."

"What is that?"

"Fear."

"Do you think so?"

"I know so," responded Emmerson, emphatically. "Saul Garcia daren't betray me if he could."

"Why not?"

"Because he knows I'd have his life for it. No, no, there's no fear of his trying on his tricks with Robert Emmerson."

How differently would he have thought, could he have looked into Saul Garcia's private room at that precise moment.

Little did he dream that, while he had been effecting his metamorphosis under the Jew's cunning touch, a message had been sent to scour the town for Daniel Pike and Nabley—otherwise Percival.

"You think I can venture forth in safety now?" asked Emmerson.

"I should think you could," said Hunston. "I am not given to complimenting, but in your rig-up you might deceive the mother that bore you."

It was true. Had Robert Emmerson been a different man, he would have made an actor of the first rank, for he executed each part with a finish which a veteran actor might have been proud of after a hundred representations.

"Now," said he to his comrades, when they had recovered from their surprise. "I tell you what my plans are."

And then he gave them a sketch of his purposes, which was to put Pike and Nabley off the cent by having forged letters written, purporting to come from the very opposite direction to that in which this exciting scene took place. But he had not taken one contingency into his calculations. This was the treachery of Saul Garcia, his masquerading friend. He would have felt less easy had he seen Garcia send a fleet-footed messenger out by the side door while he (Emmerson) was there changing his dress. Robert Emmerson little dreamt what a narrow escape he had. By some strange accident Oliver Girdwood, who received the Jew's message, did not know where to put his hand upon Daniel Pike. However, he was ready himself.

A dress had been provided for him by the far-seeing Pike, and within a few minutes after an old woman left the hotel, and hurried to the house of Saul Garcia, where she crept into a doorway nearly opposite, and watched and waited with patience. She knew well that it was a dangerous business that they had engaged in, and that haste and rashness might mar all. And when Robert Emmerson, disguised in his broad brimmed hat and long, lank white hair, hobbled and tottered along on a stick Bowerywards, the old woman followed like his shadow until she had seen him housed.

Then, shaking her fist at the door, she exclaimed to herself:

"At length I have trapped you."

Hurrying along, she was nearing the hotel when she clumped into the arms of Daniel Pike.

"Hullo, madam!" exclaimed the detective.

"Mr. Pike."

"That's me."

The old woman lifted her veil, and disclosed the features of the boy Oliver Girdwood.

"You!" ejaculated Pike. "What—what's up, lad?"

"I've found them."

"Who?"

"The gang."

"Are you sure?" said the detective, subduing his voice and growing wonderfully interested.

"I am, and can lead you to them when you please."

"Then they are caged before many hours are over."

said Daniel Pike, emphatically. "Nothing shall save them. Once let Nabley's and my grip be upon them, and the villains are doomed men."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. MOLE'S MATRIMONIAL VIEWS.

"Mr. Mole."

"Jack."

"Good gracious!"

"What can have happened?"

"Something is surely wrong!"

Then another burst of laughter. Such was Mr. Mole's greeting as he entered the room. Mr. Mole smiled benignly upon the company. He took the sensation which his appearance caused as a compliment to his personal appearance. He did not catch their various exclamations, but could only judge from their manners that his entrance was a success. It was certainly unfortunate that Nero should flourish the tip of his tail in Mr. Mole's face, for as it tickled his nose, it detracted in some degree from his dignity. Young Jack had hold of his tutor's arm and he kept a little behind him, as he had great difficulty in repressing his laughter.

At the end of the room stood Mr. Mole's faithful nurse Chloe, and she was grinning from ear to ear at the quaint figure her late patient presented. Beside Harvey sat Hilda, who was considerably amused at the sight of Mr. Mole. Close by the door sat Jack Harkaway himself, and leaning over his chair was Emily, who, albeit amused at the scene, did not think that she ought to laugh in the presence of the culprit, her beloved boy Jack. As for Harkaway senior, he wore a mingled expression of amusement and anger. Still, they did not like to tell Mr. Mole how brilliant his hirsute adornments had become. Indeed, Mr. Mole's eccentricities took such extravagant flights, that they scarcely knew what to think.

Had he dyed himself in this gaudy manner purposely? Was it his idea that he was beautified by this particular colored figurehead? Mr. Mole took his seat at the head of the table, in the place reserved for him.

"I am very glad to see you among us again, Mr. Mole," said Harkaway.

"And I, too," said Dick.

"And so am I," said Emily,

"And I."

"And all of us."

And they were, too. With all his weaknesses, they were really very fond of Mr. Mole; and he, on his part, bore them one and all great affection.

"I am very glad indeed," said the gratified Mole, "very. It gladdens the heart to be once more with you, to look around and see all the kindly faces I have learnt to love and esteem so many years."

The old gentleman's eyes were moist when he spoke, moist with genuine emotion; and when young Jack saw his quivering lip, and heard his faltering voice, his heart melted him, and he began to look upon himself as a hardened young villain.

"I ought to have a good beating for that," he thought.

"Mr. Mole," said Harvey, presently, "fill your glass, and, company all, bumpers round."

"Hear, hear!"

"I want to give you a toast."

All the glasses were fully charged.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Dick, "I may say ladies especially, for the object of this toast is a favorite with the sex, an unusual favorite, I may say."

He fixed his eyes upon the blushing Mole.

"Come, now," he murmured, in a gentle remonstrance, "I say, Harvey."

"I repeat, an unusual favorite. I have to propose a toast which will, I am sure, be drunk with the greatest enthusiasm and sincerity. I need not beat about the bush at all, ladies and gentlemen; I give you the long life and happiness of Mr. Isaac Mole, and may his shadow never grow less, may his whiskers never be less brilliant."

A roar of laughter greeted this, then a volley of cheers, and when the enthusiasm had somewhat subsided, Mr. Mole got on his legs—we beg pardon, his leg, and made a suitable acknowledgement. These were his words:

"Ladies and gentlemen, and good, kind friends all, accept, in as few words as possible, my warmest thanks. You are too good to me."

"No, no," from Harvey.

"You are indeed."

"Not a bit."

"I maintain that you are far too good. I hope I am duly sensible of your kindness, although I can never repay it; I say I hope I am. I have had the honor of being tutor to our good friend on my right; I have the honor of officiating in a like capacity to his son, a good and warm-hearted boy as ever breathed."

Young Jack thought himself a greater villain than ever when his tutor began to sound his praises.

"And," added Mr. Mole, impressively, "I may live to grow gray in the service, as who may not, for gray hairs bring no dishonor; gray hairs, I say."

"Nor blue ones either," murmured Dick Harvey.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Harvey," said the tutor.

"Pray don't."

"Oh! Well, as I was saying, when I grow old and gray in the service, the recollection of this day will be one of the proudest and happiest reminiscences in my chequered career. And now, in returning thanks to you, let me couple with my acknowledgments the name of my good nurse, who has helped very materially to procure me the indescribable happiness of meeting you here."

"Hear, hear!"

"I allude to the worthy Chloe."

"Let's give her a cheer," said Dick.

"Yes, yes," said young Jack.

"Now then; hip, hip!"

"Stop a bit," said young Jack; "let me give the time, for this must be a royal one. Here's the health of Coaley."

"Chloe!" ejaculated Mr. Mole. "Come, come, Master Jack!"

"I mean Chloe; a slip of the tongue."

"I hope, Jack," Mole said, seriously, "that it was no reflection upon my nurse's color."

"I don't see it," said young Jack.

"Chloe—Coaley," explained Mr. Mole; "black face."

"Oh-h-h, dear!" ejaculated the boy, as if he had just lighted upon some wonderful discovery; "Coaley—I couldn't think of that. She doesn't wear a fantail."

"A what?" ejaculated the perceptor, aghast.

"A fantail hat."

Mr. Mole groaned.

"Besides," continued the irrepressible Jack, looking around and seeing everyone laughing at him, "I shouldn't have gone so far as Coaley if I had wanted to use an expressive name."

"I thought not."

"No, sir," said his pupil, demurely; "the line must be drawn somewhere."

Mr. Mole nodded, and smiled approvingly.

"No sir," concluded young Jack: "I should have drawn the line at Chummy."

"Chummy!"

"Yes, sir."

And then, before the amazed tutor could offer a word of remonstrance, young Jack led off the cheering.

"Nine times nine," cried the boy, "and a little one in."

Chloe stood by with a beaming countenance.

"I have told my good, kind nurse, Chloe," said Mr. Mole, with his old touch of grandeur, as he returned to the subject, "that she has only to ask to have; that any gift she may claim of me, if in my power, shall be granted."

"Yes, sir," said Chloe.

"I wish it to be some lasting token of my esteem and gratitude. I think, perhaps," he added, looking around him, "that there is no time like the present."

"The present you mean to make Chloe?" asked young Jack.

"Present?—oh, I see. No, no; present time. So, Chloe, my kind nurse, make your claim now."

The black nurse smiled, and showed the finest set of teeth in the company. She wriggled about, and then she gnawed at her colored cotton handkerchief. Then she burst out into a loud laugh. It was a laugh that told of a long-suppressed mirth, and it caught the company one and all. In a moment they were laughing one and all in the noisiest manner possible. And all about what? Nobody knew. Chloe did probably, but the notion that so caught hold of her risible faculties was anything but a joke. It was, in fact, a very serious matter, which she thought of very seriously.

"Have you anything to claim, now you have done laughing?" demanded Mr. Mole, grandly.

Off she started again: and when she could speak, she said:

"Must I ask here, sir?"

"Of course."

"Before Massa Jack?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And Massa Harvey too?"

"Dear, dear me," exclaimed the tutor, irritably

"Of course, Chloe. Why not?"

"Because dey laugh," said Chloe, simpering. This, as you may suppose, set them off again.

"Well, Chloe, what can I do for you? What boon have you to claim at my hands?"

"You won't refuse?"

"Is not my word plighted?" demanded Mr. Mole, loftily.

"Den, Massa Mole," said Chloe, hiding her face in her handkerchief for very shame, "den, sar, I ask you to be my husband."

Had a thunderbolt fallen in their midst, the effect could not have been more stunning. Mr. Mole gasped: "Husband!"

The company looked from one to the other, and then every eye was fixed upon young Jack.

They thought this was his work.

"Your what, my good girl?" demanded Mr. Mole, gasping for breath.

"My husband, sar," repeated Chloe. "My beautiful husband, with um wooden leg."

A long silence took place, Mr. Mole looking the picture of astonishment, glaring at Chloe with his mouth wide open. As last he said:

"Are you dreaming, Chloe?"

"No, sar, I'se wide awake."

"And you mean—"

"Yes, sar. Dere, now, you gwine to refuse me; I thought so. You laugh at me, sar, 'cause I'se a poor nigger."

And then she set up a howl, and buried her face in her handkerchief. Poor Mr. Mole looked about him in distress.

"Don't cry, Chloe," he said; "I don't wish to repay your kindness in that way. Just think of something else. It will oblige me."

"Don't want nuffin' else," sobbed the nurse; "I want only you."

And she turned to the door, hanging her head, really overcome with grief and shame.

Then Mr. Mole's good part showed uppermost.

"Stop a bit, Chloe, my good girl, stop," he cried.

"It is very distressing; but do you really mean it?" She nodded.

She was too grief-stricken to speak.

"Then," said he, looking around him with an air of determination, "Isaac Mole is a man of his word. I'll keep my promise."

"You'll marry me, sar?"

"Yes."

Silent amazement was upon the face of everyone. In a minute it was broken by young Jack.

"Here's three cheers for Mr. Mole. Hip!—hip!—hip!—hurrah!"

And the company responded with a will.

"Now one more for Mrs. Mole that is to be."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

YOUNG JACK LETS MR. MOLE INTO HIS SECRET.

SOME time had elapsed since the performances of the little trick which produced such a startling transfiguration in Mr. Mole's hair and whiskers. The effects of the hair dye had not disappeared, and the irritating recollection of the practical joke still floated unpleasantly in the mind of the tutor. One morning, after breakfast, he was moodily taking stock of himself in the mirror. The result of his personal inspection was anything but satisfactory, and at length, addressing himself to his own reflection in the glass, he exclaimed, in a fretful tone of reproof:

"Mole, Mole, your personal appearance is getting very mouldy?" inquired a light voice behind him.

Turning sharply round, the tutor beheld at his elbow his hopeful pupil, young Jack Harkaway. The sight of the latter brought his wrongs vividly before him in an instant, and he answered, snappishly:

"You ought to know, sir, why I look so mouldy."

Young Jack shook his curly head in the most innocently unconscious manner.

"No, I don't, indeed," he replied.

"Look at my hair, sir," said his tutor, imperatively; "look attentively."

Jack looked attentively with both his eyes.

"Now, then," continued Mr. Mole, "have the goodness to tell me what my head of hair and whiskers look like."

"It all looks as if it had been well peppered, or struck by all the colors of the rainbow," returned Jack, throwing a scrutinizing look into his features.

"Well peppered, sir, and the colors of the rainbow?" echoed Mr. Mole, aghast.

"With white pepper and a little nutmeg, helped with the beautiful colors of brown, blue and red," added young Jack coolly.

"Jack, Jack," cried his angry tutor, "I'm surprised at the levity of your remarks. When you look at me, don't you feel the stings of remorse very acutely, eh, sir?"

"Not very, sir," returned our hero, with refreshing candor, feeling strongly inclined to laugh.

"What, not after the abominable trick you played me?" cried Mr. Mole.

"Trick, sir! I didn't play you any trick, sir."

"Jack, you are worse than your father was at your age," exclaimed the tutor, who was rapidly working himself up into a great passion. "If it hadn't been for that infernal stuff you applied to my hair, and—"

"Oh, Mr. Mole," interrupted our hero, vehemently, "I hope you don't believe that was my doing."

"But I tell you I do believe it," returned Mr. Mole, emphatically.

"Then I'm very sorry, for you're quite mistaken, I assure you."

"Mistaken?"

"Yes, sir."

"Impossible!" angrily exclaimed Mr. Mole. "Didn't I

I confide to you the secret that I was getting mouldy and wished to dye—a—that is, I mean, restore the natural color of my once beautiful hair?"

"You did, sir."

"Didn't you procure me a bottle of liquid hair restorer?"

"Quite true."

"And didn't you, instead, bring me some vile concoction?"

"No, sir," interrupted young Jack, with all the boldness of unimpeachable innocence. "The vile 'concoction' was not my fault."

"The deuce it wasn't!" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"Whose fault was it, then?"

Jack was silent.

"Tell me, my dear Jack. I'm sure you know, and I will have revenge; yes, Jack, revenge."

"Well, sir," resumed our hero at length, with well-feigned hesitation, "I don't like the idea of splitting upon others; still, I must say I think such a disgraceful trick as this deserves to be exposed."

"Undoubtedly it does, my dear boy; you are quite right. I honor your sentiments; go on, pray."

"I hope you won't say I told you," said Jack.

"Not a word, not a word," protested Mole, eagerly.

"Well, then," continued his pupil, "I entrusted the purchasing of the hair dye to Sunday."

"Did you, indeed—to that rascally nigger?" ejaculated the tutor, in a tone of dismay.

"Yes, and he promised to get me some of a lovely chestnut brown."

"Chestnut brown, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Mole, hysterically, at the horrible absurdity of the idea. Ha, ha! sky blue and red."

"Well?"

"Well, it seems Sunday took Monday."

"Another rascally nigger," growled Mr. Mole.

"Yes—into his confidence, and they must have made up their minds to play this trick upon you, for they bought the dye together."

"Yes, yes; I see it all now clearly enough; two rascally niggers in the plot," almost gasped Mr. Mole. "Bless my soul it's a wonder I wasn't dyed the colors of the rainbow all over."

"It was a cruel joke on their parts, very cruel," remarked Jack, shaking his head reprovingly; "and on the very night, too, that the lovely Chloe asked you to make her happy."

"Cruel!" echoed his tutor, savagely; "it was diabolical. And you gave these sooty vagabonds the money to purchase the—the—hair restorer, and they—"

"Brought me three bottles, which I used as the labels directed," affirmed Jack.

"Oh, they were labelled, were they?"

"Yes, sir. No 1. Right whisker; 2. Left whisker; 3. For his nob, to be well rubbed in."

Mr. Mole stamped his foot, and rubbed his head fiercely.

"I'll give them something for their nobs for this," he growled, though his clenched teeth. "I will, the ugly black beggars! Ugh! how I hate black niggers!"

"I wonder, for my part," said young Jack, who was trying to draw out his preceptor, "why 'black niggers' were ever allowed to come into the world at all."

Just at this moment, a peculiar sound became audible from without. Like one or more persons endeavoring to smother a laugh. The voices, too, had a remarkable resemblance to the voices of the two niggers, Sunday and Monday. But Mr. Mole, in his angry excitement, was striding up and down the room, and did not hear them. Our hero did, but took no notice, being more profitably employed. Like a true scion of the Harkaways, he never lost a chance of a bit of practical fun, and had taken advantage of this tutor's absorption to fix a pin in the seat of his armchair. It was a very nice sharp one, and of course the point was uppermost. This being comfortably arranged, Jack went up to Mr. Mole, and laid his hand gently on his arm.

"I hope, sir," he said, entreatingly, "you'll forgive poor Sunday and Monday."

"Forgive them?" growled the preceptor, catching sight of himself in the glass. "Ugh! I should like to smash the pair of them."

"But they don't know any better, sir," continued our hero, pleadingly. "They're not possessed of your nobility of disposition."

"That's true, my young friend, very true," said Mr. Mole, as he took out his toothpick and began picking his teeth; "and—"

"You're of such a forgiving spirit," interrupted his petitioner.

"Yes, of course," continued Mr. Mole, "it's our duty, as Christians, to return good for evil, and cultivate feelings of love and charity towards—oh, dash it!—d—n it!" he shrieked, suddenly, as his youthful pupil, either accidentally, or in a fit of boyish exuberance, lurched forward and playfully knocked up his arm.

It happened, too, singularly enough, to be the toothpick arm, and the jerk had caused Mr. Mole to stick the point of the useful little instrument he was using into the nerve of his hollow tooth.

"Oh—oh—ugh!" groaned the preceptor, as he clenched his hands, and performed a sort of agonized Highland fling on the hearthrug. "O—h!"

"What's the matter, sir?" inquired his practical pupil.

"You've driven me mad," gasped the distracted tutor.

"It's that poor tooth again," said the hopeful, in a well-assumed tone of pity; "hold your jaw, sir," he exclaimed, earnestly.

"Hold yours," shouted Mr. Mole, in a fury.

"With both hands, sir; it will relieve the pain," continued the imperturbable Jack.

Up went the hands of the agonized preceptor to his chin.

He was desperately holding his jaw as directed, with all his might.

"Is it better?" asked his pupil presently, in a tone of much concern.

"Much better, much," answered Mr. Mole, complacently, as the anguish of the irritated nerve subsided.

"And you'll forgive poor Sunday and Monday, won't you, Mr. Mole?"

"The infernal rascals!" again burst out the tutor; "I should like to—"

"But as a Christian," interposed our hero, suggestively.

"Ah, yes—true, I forgot," admitted Mr. Mole, calming down; "well, as a Christian, I suppose I must forgive the black vags—I mean the ignorant darkies—but I must teach them a lesson."

"Suppose you sit down, sir, and think the matter over?" said Jack, suggestively.

"That's the very thing I'm going to do," replied Mr. Mole, as he walked to his armchair and dropped into it.

The pin took immediate effect, and he started up like a Jack-in-the-box, with a loud yell.

"Ugh, murder! I'm impaled!" he shrieked, as he clapped his hands behind him, and rubbed away vigorously.

Whilst at the same moment the door flew open with a loud bang, admitting, with startling abruptness, Messrs. Sunday and Monday, who had, for some time past, had their ears to the keyhole, and who now fell sprawling into the room upon their hands and knees. Forming what is called upon the stage a picture of astonishment. Mr. Mole, who had, in his anger and surprise, entirely forgotten all his sublime sentiments of love and charity, glared down at the two darkies like a gray-headed fiend.

They in their turns glared up at him.

Jack took advantage of the momentary tableau to possess himself of his pin.

The tutor was the first to speak.

"What do you mean by bursting in upon my privacy in this manner, you two black fellows, eh?" he demanded, fiercely.

"Golly, Massa Mole, returned Sunday, whose eyes were open as wide as saucers, "him beg um pardon."

"Beg my pardon—he hanged, sirrah! Stand up, both of you, and let me know the meaning of this conduct."

The two niggers scrambled up from their knees, writhing their features into the strange contortions, as though something tickled them, and they were trying not to laugh.

"Now, then, explain," said Mr. Mole, wrathfully.

"Well, den," they commenced, "we was coming v p de stairs to speak to you, massa."

"Both togeder, arm in arm."

"One arter de oder."

"How could that be?" roared the tutor. "How could you be together, arm in arm, if you came one after the other?"

"We come up sideways, Massa Mole," explained Monday, with a grin.

"Well, and you were coming to speak to me, eh?" said Mr. Mole, viciously.

"Yes, massa; well, when we got to de door, I felt drefful tired."

"Golly, so did I," joined in Sunday; "and say to my brudder here, 'Let's hab a rest on de mat afore going in to speak to de grand Mole.'"

"Dat quite true, s'elp me golly!" affirmed Monday; "so we stop on de mat."

"And lean against de door to get our breafe."

"Or to peep through the keyhole—which?" asked Mr. Mole, suspiciously.

"No! 'pon him honor, massa, him wouldnt do sich a ting!" protested Monday, placing his hand on his heart with much dignity.

"Him rather tink not," exclaimed his companion.

"What made the door fly open then so abruptly?" demanded the tutor.

"Well, it war jiss this way," replied Monday; "while we was leaning our way backs agin de door, Brudder Sunday war took wid a drefful sneezing fit."

"Dat's a fact," admitted the African.

"And all of a sudden he let off one of dem big sneeze like de report ob a cannon, an' dat blowed de door open, and shot us both into the room."

"Yes, massa; dat's 'actly how it war," corroborated Sunday.

"Oh, was it?" returned Mr. Mole, in a quietly sarcastic tone, that proved he had considerable doubts of the veracity of the speakers; "then answer me one question."

"Yes, massa."

"If you were standing, as you say you were, with your backs to the door, how is it, when the door opened, you fell in with your faces foremost?"

The two darkies were rather puzzled to account for this phenomenon without betraying themselves.

So, after scratching their heads in a perplexed manner for several seconds, Monday replied:

"Dat's jiss what boders us, Massa Mole. Dere's some-tings in dis world partic'lar bodering."

The tutor laughed sarcastically.

"It doesn't bother me at all, you pair of vagabonds," he said, sternly; "you were listening at the keyhole."

The darkies turned almost whitey-brown with indignation at the charge.

Young Jack Harkaway came to their assistance with a brilliant suggestion.

"Perhaps the violent shock of the sneeze caused them to turn over, Mr. Mole," he said.

"Dat was it, Massa Jack," exclaimed the niggers, pouncing upon the idea like a couple of crows upon a slug.

"De shock turn us de wrong way up'ards," Mr. Mole seemed to retain his own opinion on the subject.

But he said at length, after a pause:

"And what was it you had to say to me?"

"Um wanted to tell you sometink bery partic'lar," replied Sunday, with an important wink.

"What?"

"Dis child wanted to tell you dat to-day war him birthday."

"Ugh!" grunted Mr. Mole, in profound disgust.

"Yes, massa, dis bery day twenty-eight years ago, I come into dis wicked world."

Sunday grinned at this as though it was a great national benefit. But the tutor checked him by remarking:

"Then I think the sooner you're out of it the better. Of what use are you, and what has your birthday to do with me?"

"Him thought p'raps—you sech kind-hearted man—you might like to drink our health, Massa Mole," said Monday, insinuatingly.

"Or gib him lilly drop ob sometink to drink his own health," suggested his companion, modestly.

"I should like to give you both a good dose of arsenic, you two smutty-faced villains," muttered the tutor to himself, between his teeth.

At this juncture, young Jack pulled his coat back slightly to attract his attention.

"Massa Jack's speaking for us," said Sunday, with a chuckle to his comrade; "we got sometink, you see—drop of Mole's rum, perhaps."

Whatever it was that our hero said to Mole, it was evidently satisfactory. A smile, of rather a grim quality, however, overspread his features, and turning, he left the room. He soon returned with a benevolent smile and a bottle in each hand.

"I have something here," he said, "that will do you good. I will take a glass of it with you, and wish you better manners."

"Hair, hair, hair—I mean hear, here, here!" shouted young Jack, vociferously.

The negroes brightened up immensely at the words.

"Him bery much obligated to you, Massa Mole," exclaimed Sunday.

"Both bery much obligated, Massa Mole," said his equally rejoicing companion.

"Don't mention it," you pair of ug—I mean my excellent, worthy—a—friends," returned the courteous preceptor, as he filled two glasses for his guests out of one bottle, and one for himself.

"I know you like good old Jamaica," he continued; "try that. I prefer a lighter beverage. Your very good health! My dear friend, Sunday, I wish you many happy returns of this day."

"I wish the same to both of you," joined in young Jack.

"And dis child wish de same to both ob you, s'elp my golly he do!" exclaimed Sunday, as he took the glass and smacked his thick lips eagerly. The glasses were emptied in a twinkling.

"Is it good?" asked Mr. Mole, with a grin worthy of Mephistopheles.

"Him fus rate—reg'ly golopshus," replied Monday, glowingly.

"It de most scrumptious drop ob rum him eber tastel" exclaimed his companion.

"Try another," said the tutor, as he replenished the glasses.

They were emptied as quickly as before, and as quickly refilled.

This process was repeated several times.

The darkies began to stagger.

Their eyes rolled in their heads.

The rum, or something else, was rapidly taking effect upon them.

"I say, brudder, how you—hic—feel, eh?" hic-coughed Monday at length to his comrade.

"Him feel jess like—hic—bery queer," returned Sunday, as he staggered and leant against Monday.

"Dat's jess how dis chile feel himself," murmured the Limbian, as he tried to steady himself against his companion.

After standing in this position a few seconds, Monday exclaimed in an imbecile manner:

"It time—hic—go home—hic—dinner."

The two gradually grew more and more incoherent and more incapable of supporting themselves.

And Mr. Mole and his pupil, having placed a couple of chairs for their accommodation, kindly gave them a push, and they dropped into them.

There they lay with their eyes shut and their capacious mouths wide open, snoring like a couple of grampuses, utterly unconscious.

"Bravo, morphia!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, triumphantly.

"Did you put anything in the rum?" asked Jack.

"Yes, I drugged it!" replied his amiable preceptor, with an immense chuckle, as he rubbed his hands together joyously; "and now they're quite at my mercy—now it's my turn. Ha, ha! my turn, Jack, my boy!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A PLAN OF RETALIATION ON MOLE'S PRINCIPLES OF LOVE AND CHARITY.

FOR full five minutes did Isaac Mole gloat like a vampire over his sable victims.

"Don't they look ugly?" he exclaimed at length.

"They don't look very pretty, certainly," admitted his pupil.

"Pretty! They're frightful! Ugh! the brutes! They're hideous!"

Here Mr. Mole became so virtuously shocked at physical imperfections that he boxed their ears and was about to administer sundry punches in the region of the ribs. But Jack stopped him.

"You should not hit a man when he's down, Mr. Mole," he said, quietly; "it's cowardly."

"Pshaw!" returned the enthusiast; "these things are not men."

"What are they, then?" asked his pupil.

"Pigs! Black puddings!" answered Mr. Mole, indignantly; "anything but men. Did they not cause my hair to turn brown, red and blue?"

"Yes; and now what are you going to do with them?" asked Jack.

"I'm thinking. We can't shoot them, or smother them, or boil them," he remarked, in a reflective tone. "Not very well," said young Jack, "and I don't think they quite deserve that, even if we could."

"I do," returned the ferocious Mole, quickly. "I think they deserve the worst at my hands. Look at me, and see the painful remains of red, brown and blue, the wretches!"

"Yes, but they didn't shoot you, or smother you, or boil you," argued Jack.

"Hang me, if I know what to do with them," confessed the tutor, at length, in a perplexed tone.

"We can't dye them, can we?" said Jack, after a moment.

"Dye them—no!" exclaimed his preceptor, viciously; "they're past dyeing. We might whitewash them, though, perhaps, eh—oh?" he asked, eagerly.

Mr. Mole chuckled and rubbed his hands in a particularly energetic manner at this idea.

"I think whitewashing would do well," he continued, cheerfully; "excellently well."

"It wouldn't be bad," laughed Jack. "You'd lay it on pretty thick, I suppose, wouldn't you?"

"I believe you, my boy? I would spare no expense. They should have three coats apiece—nothing less. I'll plaster them inside and out, the dirty beggars! Yes, they shall be whitewashed."

"Where's the whitewash?"

"In a snop close by," returned his young companion.

"Will you run at once, my dear boy," continued the tutor, excitedly, "and order a—a—let me see; how much whiting shall we want?"

"Well, I should think two hundred-weight would be sufficient," returned young Jack, stolidly.

"I should think so too, but by all means let's have enough while we're about it."

"That will be plenty."

"Well, then, we shall want a tub of size?"

"Yes."

"And a plasterer's brush, a good, big, flapping one, that will wind about the rascals' ugly ears, and tickle their flat noses."

"And fill their mouths, eh, Mr. Mold?" grinned Jack.

"I'll fill 'em, trust me," grinned the tutor, in an angry manner, in reply.

"Stop!" cried Mole; "as you go down, tell them to bring up two of the largest pails they have in the house."

"All right!" cried our hero.

"And here stay!" shrieked the excited Mr. Mole. "I must also have one of the biggest soup kettles immediately."

"I'll tell 'em to send up the kitchen boiler."

Mr. Mole, left alone with his prey, first performed a kind of triumphant war-dance all to himself.

"Ugh, you sleeping beauties!" he exclaimed; "there's a pair of noses. What do they mean by spreading out all over their faces, eh? They must be compressed, squeezed, ha, ha! So they shall be; where's the tongs?"

Mole hopped to the fireplace like a nimble old jackdaw, and seized the steel implements alluded to.

"Now for it," he cried.

But just at the interesting crisis, a voice behind him cried:

"Come, drop the tongs."

The startled tutor did as he was ordered, and dropped the tongs with a crash.

"What, got back already?" exclaimed Mole, in surprise. "Why, you must have flown."

"No, I haven't started yet," returned Jack.

"Not started! Am I to lose my revenge?"

"No; but I've got a better idea."

"Better?"

"Ever so much."

"What? Let me hear. Quick, dear boy."

"Well, then, I was thinking, instead of whitewashing these darkies, suppose were to perform another operation?"

"What, what?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Paint them," grinned Jack.

"Paint them?" echoed his master.

"Yes, with oil colors."

"Oil colors?" repeated Mole.

"Don't you see the advantage?" continued the youthful lover of mischief.

"Not very clearly," replied his tutor.

"I'll explain, then. Whitewash can be easily got off by washing; oil colors, when dry, can't."

"True, true," cried Mole, admiringly. "Clever boy; we'll have oil colors by all means. I'll leave it to you, only be quick."

"May I choose the colors?" asked Jack, as he approached the door.

"Choose what you like, but be sure and bring plenty of dryers," replied Mole.

"I will. A little glue wouldn't be a bad thing to rub in their hair, would it?" suggested the youth, playfully.

"No, capital, dear boy; bring lots of glue and brushes."

"I'll bring all they've got in the shop," cried Jack, as he once more rushed from the apartment.

"Don't forget the oil and turps," shrieked the enthusiastic Mole after him, in a fever of excitement. Jack soon reappeared, bristling with brushes in the shape of paint brushes from head to foot, and with a bright smudge of emerald green on the tip of his

youthful nose, closely followed by two porters, who carried the rest of the materials, including an immense variety of paintpots of all sizes.

"Are you sure you've got everything, my darling boy?" eagerly inquired Mr. Mole.

"Quite sure."

"What colors have you brought?"

"White for the groundwork."

"Good."

"Red for the complexion."

"Red, ah, I had it in my hair," remarked Mole; "and what are you going to use for those rascals' wool?" he asked.

"Glue as a preparatory coating, and emerald green to finish their noble heads of hair."

"Emerald green for their wool," roared the exulting preceptor, "emerald green hair. Ha, ha! excellent. One of my whiskers was blue, I remember."

"Yes, and theirs will be green. There was no green about you, though, was there?"

"No, no, no green," chuckled Mole, "no green; but where's the glue, dear boy?"

"Here, sir," answered Jack, holding up a bag containing about six pounds.

"Right," returned his tutor; "now the size?"

"Here, sir, in this tub. It's quite full."

"Good. And this can?"

"Contains linseed oil."

"And this?"

"Turps."

"Bravo!"

"And here's the white lead."

"Excellent youth, boy of my heart," murmured Mole; "come to my arms."

Mr. Mole embraced his clever pupil warmly.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, stopping in the midst of his caress, "the dryers! I don't see the dryers, that most important ingredient of—"

"Here they are, sir," said Jack, as he shied the packet at his respected tutor and caught him on his nose; nothing, you see, is wanting."

"Jack," said Mole, "I was not wanting that hard packet on my nose, and understand, if I should ask you for a paint pot, please place it in my hand and not throw it in my face. The feeling is most unpleasant."

"Quite an accident, sir," said young Jack.

"Well, then, my dear boy, now for my sweet revenge!" exclaimed Mole, as he recovered himself.

"All right," returned Jack, with much animation; "and, first of all, we'll put on some glue in a pipkin to melt, while we're getting the paint ready."

"Quite right; thoughtful boy, quite right," assented Mr. Mole, admiringly.

The earthen vessel, containing the glutinous material, was then placed upon the fire, and our hero hauled forward a large paint pot.

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[THE END.]

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